

BĀBĀ NĀNAK

HARJEET SINGH GILL



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revised edition 2016

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*nikke hūde ṭāge čāre
vaḍḍe hoe hal vāhiā
būḍe hoe māḷā pherī
te rāb dā ulābā lāhiā*

As a child, I was a shepherd. As an adult,
I ploughed the fields. Now, in old age,
I pray to appease the Almighty Lord...
Thus a popular Sūfī saying sums up
the three steps in the life of a Punjabi.
Another Sūfī discourse warns the young girl
not to waste time in playing. She should prepare
her dowry, for soon she will have to leave her parents'
home, *peke*, to go to her in-laws, *sauhre*... These
streets of her father will, one day, be only a dream.
At the same time, the obdurate Qāzī can also not
stop the ultimate reunion.

*bālpan khéd le kūrīe nī
terā aj ke kal muklāvā
sauhre kār albat jāṇā
peke kūrā dāvā*

*ik din tenū supnā thīsan
galīā bābal vālīā vo
uḍ gae paur phullā de kolō
saṇ pattar saṇ ḍālīā vo
jis tan lagge soī tan jāṇe
hor gallā karn sukhālīā vo
rauh ve qāzī dil nahīō rāzī
gallā hoīā te hovan vālīā vo*

I have followed the dictates of the first Sūfī discourse
but have reversed the cycle of the second commandment...
I spent (wasted) my youth in the streets of Paris (playing
with) writing, teaching, discoursing on French intellectual
tradition, of Abélard, Port Royal Logic, Condillac, the modern
philosophers of signification (included in my lectures at the
Collège de France on Signification in Buddhist and French
traditions in 1998), the tradition of my empirical as well as
conceptual in-laws, *sauhre*, to finally compose this biographical
discourse of Bābā Nānak, to come back to my Punjabi
parents, *peke*...

Before the first edition of Bābā Nānak was commented upon
by eminent scholars in 2003, the text was appreciated by my friends,
Padamvir, Gobind Thukral and L P Singh at the Institute of
Advanced Study, Shimla. Grateful acknowledge is due to their
affection and their encouragement...H S G.

for my mother

Bibi Gurcharn Kaur



Kar Seva

Illustrations by Anila Ariane Gill
present the ambiance in which
Bābā Nānak might have travelled
during his Udāsis

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9 ॥ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਹੋਈ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਕੀਸ
ਚੁ ਸਚੈ ਸੋਚਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਸੋਚੀਲੁ ਖਟਾਗੁ ॥ ਚੁਪੈ ਚੁਪਨੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਲਗੈ ਰਿਗੁ
ਲੇਵਿ ਤਾਗੁ ॥ ਭੁਖਿ ਆਰੁ ਖਨ ਚਿਤਰੀ ਜੇ ਬੀਨਾ ਪੁਰੀ ਆਰੁ ॥ ਸਹਸ ਸਿਆਹਿ ਪਾਲ ਖੋ
ਰਿਤੁ ਇਕ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਨਾ ॥ ਕਿਵੇ ਸਾਚਿ ਆਗੇ ਹੀ ਐ ਕਿਵੇ ਕੂਨੈ ਤੁਏ ਪਾਲਿ ॥ ਹੁਕਮ ਰਤਾ
ਈ ਚਲੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨ ਅਕਾਰੁ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜ
ਈ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਜੀਅ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਰਿ ਆਈ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਓਤੁ ਨ ਚੁਕਮੁ ਲਿ
ਖਦੁ ਖਸੁ ਖਪਾਈ ਅਗਿ ॥ ਇਕ ਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਬਖਸੀ ਸਾਇਕ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਦਾ ਰੁਵਾਈ
ਅਗਿ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭਿ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਜੇ ਬੁਝੈ ਤਾ ਹਉ
ਮੈ ਕਹੈ ਨ ਕਹਿ ॥ ੨ ॥ ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋਤੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਾਗੁ ॥ ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋਤਾ ਤਿਜੈ ਨੀ ਸਾਹਾਗਾ
ਵੈ ਕੋਗੁ ॥ ਵਿਵਰਿ ਆਈ ਆਚਰਿ ॥ ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਦਿਖਮੁ ॥ ਵੀਚਰਿ ॥ ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ
ਜਿ ਕਰੇ ਤਨੁ ਖੋਲਿ ॥ ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਜੀਅ ਲੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਦੇਹਿ ॥ ਗਾਵੈ ਕੋ ਜਾਪੈ ਦਿਸੈ ਦੁਕਿ ॥ ਗਾਵੈ
ਕੋ ਵੇਖੈ ਗਦਗਦੁ ॥ ਕਥਨਾ ਕਥੀ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਤੇਹਿ ॥ ਕਥਿ ਕਥਿ ਕਥੀ ਕੋਟੀ ਕੋਟੀ ਕੋਟੀ ਦੇ
ਦਾ ਦੇ ਲੈ ਦੇਖਿ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਜੁਗ ਸੁਗਿ ਤਰਿ ਖਾਰੀ ਖਾਰਿ ॥ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਚਲਾਏ ਗਾਨਾ ਨਕ
ਵਿਗਸੈ ਵੇਪਰਵਾਹੁ ॥ ੩ ॥ ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਾਚਿ ਨਾਇ ਭੁਖਿ ਆਰੁ ਭੁਖਿ ਆਪਾਗਾ ਆਪਾਹਿੰਗ
ਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦਾ ਤਿ ਕੇ ਦਾਤਾ ॥ ਫੇਰਿ ਕਿ ਅਗੈ ਰਖੀ ਐ ਜਿ ਤੁਏ ਸੈ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ ॥ ਮੁਹਿ ਕੋ ਬੋ
ਲਾਇ ਬੋਲੀ ਐ ਜਿ ਤੁਸੁ ਹਿ ਪਹੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਦੇ ਲਾਸ ਚਿਨਾਇ ਵਰਿ ਆਈ ਟੀਰ
ਗਿ ॥ ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੇਖੁ ॥ ਆਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵੈ ਜਾਈ ਐ ਸਭੁ ਅਪੇਸਾ ਚਿਆ
ਗਿ ॥ ੪ ॥ ਥਾਪਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਜਿਨਿ ਸੋਇ
ਤਿਨਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਮਾਨਾ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਗਾਵੈ ਐ ਗੁਣਿ ਨਿਪਨਾਗਾ ॥ ਵੀਐ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਰਖੀ
ਐ ਭਾਉ ॥ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਰਿਹਰਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਰਿਲੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਨਾਦੁ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਦੇਵੇ ਗੁਰ

BĀBĀ
NĀNAK

on the moonlit night of April
fourteen-sixty-nine
in the sacred land of the five rivers
a son was born
to mother Triptā
to father Kālū
the entire universe echoed
with the music of the spheres
with the harmony of the planets
the gods and goddesses
rejoiced with songs and dance
the cosmic dance of peace and prosperity
of absolute unity
of body and soul
of earths and heavens
piercing the fog of ignorance
of sin and superstition
of crass and corruption
the light of love and longings
spread over the entire universe

the child Nānak
brought with him
the hope of humanity
the hymn of serenity
the discourse of reason and rationality
in the Dark Middle Ages of Hindustān !

the sages paid homage
to the divine child
the learned bowed
to the miraculous birth
the yogis, the sādhus, the seers
felt the cosmic rhythm
men and women
young and old
longed for his blessings
for his audience...

there was movement
in the planets
there was growth
in the plants
there was spring all over
once again there was life
there was love
there was hope of reunion
of ultimate bliss
of eternal peace
beyond faiths and fraternities
beyond castes and classes
there was cosmic equilibrium

between light and darkness
between sun and moon
between stars and spheres
between logic and love !

as Nānak grew up
his father engaged
a Brahmin and a Muslim scholar
to acquaint the young lad
with the classics of his two traditions
soon Nānak was proficient
in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic...

he reflected upon
the wisdom
the scepticism
the intellectual incisions
of the great masters
of the great prophets
of the great gurus

and wondered if
it was enough
to steer through
the vicissitudes of life
in this world of absolute contradictions
the world of real men and women
the world of flesh and blood

if there was more to knowledge
more to reason
more to meditation and reflection...

the more he learned
the more he knew
the more he was anxious
the more he was uncertain
about the absolute faith and fortitude
that was required
to stay steady and steadfast

in this world of upheavals
in this world of uncertainties
in this world of betrayals !

the divine child
went about his own way
reflecting and meditating
on the affairs of the world around
on the ceremonial limits
of temples and mosques
on the rites and rituals
of the priests and the qāzīs
he soon realised
that all was not false
if all was not true
he had to sift the pearls
from the heaps of mud

he had to purify
the stinking waters
of centuries of neglect
he had to constitute
a new discourse

where one could
differentiate and discern
where ideas and images
could form new conceptual constructs
delineate new horizons ...

it was a daunting task
but he had no choice
his very birth in this world
his very advent
in those tumultuous times
activated his spirit
his search
his inquiry
to the utmost limits
of the ancient discourses
of the ancient disputes ...

and in this environment
of faith and fortitude
there were miracles all over ...

once he was sleeping under the shade of a tree
as the sun moved
so did the tree...

on another occasion
it was the turn of a king cobra
to protect the divine child
from the scorching heat of the Punjab
for hours, the ferocious beast
kept his large hood
over the sublime face
that radiated with spiritual power...

often he was seen
in the company of
the wandering sādhus
the roaming yogis
the solitary faqirs
they discussed and discoursed
the eternal truths
the sublime verities
of spirit and mind
of this vast universe
of faiths and fraternities...

it was obvious however
that something was amiss
in those overcrowded thoughts
in those intellectual gymnastics
in those artificial simplicities
in those deliberate complexities
the truth
if there was one

was beyond those dialectics
 was beyond those formal horizons !

when Nānak was eighteen
 following the custom of the country
 he was married to Sulakhanī
 the union gave birth to two sons
 Sirī Chand and Lakhmī Dās
 Sirī Chand became a great yogi
 his disciples continued the lineage for centuries ...

but family was not yet Nānak's mission
 he spent his time in meditation and reflection
 Nānak's silence and serenity
 was getting more and more mysterious
 as the parents were worried
 he was sent to his sister to Sultānpur
 to help his brother-in-law
 in administration and accounts ...

from one world to another
 the existence remained the same

the business of administration
 did not interest Nānak
 often he got stuck
 at the number thirteen
 which in Punjabi also meant "yours"
 he continued to recite, *tērā, tērā*, thirteen, thirteen

yours, yours !
it was all yours, of the Almighty
of the Master of all !

Nānak was devoted to his elder sister
Bēbē Nānkī
a very religious and pious person herself
she was the first to recognise
the divinity in her younger brother

as a child she played with him
she brought him up with love and care
she recounted the fairy tales
the legends and the myths of the Punjab
the mysterious growth of flora and fauna
in the vast jungles and the hinterlands

the symbols of boat, the river, the fish
the serpent, the peacock, the cuckoo
were employed by Nānak
later in articulating his reflections
on this and the other world
the child Nānak was nurtured
in the cultural heritage of his ancestors
of sages and seers

Bēbē Nānkī adored the simple gestures
of her younger brother
his fables, his tales
his imagination, his vision
when the parents admonished him

for his carelessness
 for his other worldly behaviour
 she was always there
 to plead on his behalf
 to defend the divinity of her divine brother
 she admired his reflections, his perceptions
 she appreciated the garb of the faqir
 she followed the transcendental meditations of Nānak

the brother and sister formed a perfect harmony
 of body and soul
 a perfect balance
 of head and heart

of brotherly devotion
 of sisterly affection

as an adult
 Nānak always remembered his sister
 after every Udāsī
 after every pilgrimage
 after every travel in search of truth
 he came to see Bēbē Nānkī
 to pay respect to his elder sister
 to ignite the flame of humanity
 to surcharge the atmosphere of serenity
 to respond to the aspirations of family and friends

to celebrate the ideal and sacred love
 of brother and sister

at home and in his wanderings
Nānak mixed with the farmer, the trader
the goldsmith, the carpenter, the weaver, the potter
the yogi, the sādhu, the seer
to perceive nobility and sanctity in every profession
in every caste and creed
in every hearth and home

he paid respect to the young, to the elderly
the mothers baking bread
the girls at their spinning wheels
the beautiful brides
the handsome bridegrooms
the farmers with their ploughs
the labourers toiling in the fields
the artisans with their craft

he was at home with the poorest of the poor
he admired their way of life
their language, their idioms, their expressions
he used their simple and affectionate language
in all his compositions
he articulated the most complex concepts
in the idiom of his beloved artisans
the creators of the most beautiful forms and figures
the noble artists of his sacred country ...

at dawn Nānak used to go to the river
for a dip in the pure waters
of the flowing stream
to cleanse his body and spirit ...

Nānak was thirty-six years old
 when on the night of full moon
 on the night of soothing light
 he went deep
 into the waters of ॐVēī
 the river of salvation...

the angels flew him to heaven
 where the God Almighty
 the Lord of the Universe
 in the guise of a splendid old man
 with long white beard
 clad in red robes
 was sitting on a golden throne
 with all the gods and goddesses
 in attendance to the Master of Heavens
 the celestial music was vibrating
 every horizon of the universe

the majesty, the grandeur
 of the presence
 of the audience
 transcended all imagination
 Nānak duly bowed before the Eternal Spirit
 he was beckoned to step forward
 to receive nectar
 the milk of the heavenly buffalo
 from the very hands of the Creator
 of all worlds and heavens
 of all stars and spheres...

Nānak was intoxicated
he had just received the blessings
the greatest gift of his life
the Knowledge of all knowledge
the Secret of all secrets
he had just acquired
the most splendid spiritual serenity
the vision of the most transcendental truth
the assurance of his mission
of love and peace
for all faiths, for all fraternities ...

the good tidings spread to the thirteen worlds
all gods and goddesses
all stars and spheres
sang in unison
Hail Nānak !
the Chosen of the Lord of the Universe !

now the entire universe
was Nānak's temple
where all gods and goddesses
all suns and moons
all stars and spheres
in perfect harmony
in perfect rhythm
of cosmic music
worshipped his Master ...

there was no Hindu
no Musalmān

all humanity
all men and women
of all races and religions
were one
before the One
and the Unique
the Creator and Master of the Universe

the Eternal Spirit
the Ultimate Transcendence
could not be confined
within any sects
within any bricks
within any boundaries
temples and mosques
dresses and diets
rites and rituals
must give way
to the absolute
to the universal

such was the mission of Nānak
the discourse of his truth
of his vision
of his philosophy !

the child Nānak was transformed into
Bābā Nānak
the Sage, the Master, the Guru
he set out
to reach the four corners of the world

to spread the truth of his vision
 to meet the noble souls
 of all religions, of all races
 to discuss and discern
 the problems and pains that inflict the suffering humanity
 to propose peace and patience
 discipline and detachment
 to conquer the evil spirits
 the temptations of this mundane world
 to bring harmony
 between body and spirit
 between mind and intellect

love, service, serenity
 peace, harmony, temperance
 were the kernel themes
 of his universal message
 of his transcendental truth !

Bābā Nānak
 and Mardānā, his companion
 the musician with his melodious Rabāb
 set out to travel and to witness
 the vicissitudes of this world ...

the young Mardānā was always hungry
 for the pleasures of body and flesh
 Bābā Nānak always
 counselled patience and perseverance
 travelling through villages and wilderness

Mardānā had his wishes fulfilled
his greed often overwhelmed him

Mardānā would collect alms and offerings
Bābā would insist on
throwing away all unnecessary baggage
Mardānā would feel lonely and frightened
in the savage jungles
Bābā would consider the wilderness
as the dwelling of the Lord
the disciple and the Guru
presented the dialectics
of flesh and spirit
the mediation continued
throughout their life !

in one of the sorties
Mardānā could stand no more
he was so hungry
he refused to follow the Master
in the ferocious jungles
the Guru asked him to eat
the fruits of a wild plant
the berries were so delicious
Mardānā kept some for later crises

one day taken over by his usual hunger
he bit into the forbidden fruit
and fell unconscious
the Guru had transformed

the poisonous plant into delicious food
 only once to quench
 the thirst and hunger of Mardānā
 he had to be patient

patience is sweet
 greed is poison
 the Bābā continued
 with his eternal discourse !

while Mardānā could not resist
 the riches of the world
 the Bābā practiced austerities in the jungle
 he ate wild fruits
 and tasted sand and hot winds
 for days he meditated
 in absolute isolation
 in the company of his Master
 the Lord of the Universe
 under the canopy of the stars
 listening to the sublime music
 of the innermost rhythm
 of the steady mind
 of the resolution of all conflicts
 achieving a harmony and balance
 of absolute beauty
 of absolute truth !

in April on the occasion of Baisākhī
 Bābā Nānak and Mardānā
 arrived on the banks of the Ganges

the devotees were taking the holy bath
 throwing water to the East
 towards the rays of the sun
 to appease and worship their ancestors ...

Bābā Nānak went down
 bathed and began to throw water
 to the West, towards his home
 towards his farmland

this ceremonial contradiction
 this religious absurdity
 infuriated the devotees
 who considered it sacrilege
 to go against the age old custom
 and asked Bābā to stop
 this most irreligious act
 of changing the holy directions

Bābā Nānak answered by a counter-argument
 why the devotees were throwing water to the East
 how can it reach millions of miles
 where in heaven were their ancestors
 when it could not reach
 a few hundred miles to his fields in the West !

on another occasion
 he was asked to pray along with another devotee
 after the prayer was over
 the Bābā questioned the devotee
 what was he doing during the prayer

instead of concentrating on meditation
on the transcendental spirit
of the Lord of the Universe
he was selling oil in Kabul
he was all the time thinking
of his business affairs
of his loss and profit
of his material needs

there is no prayer
no religious, pious act
if there is no concentration
the mind and body
must be emptied of all frivolities
of all that is Other
that is foreign to spiritual purity
mere ceremonial prayer is of no use
it is hypocritical
it is a false path
it leads nowhere !

once the Bābā was offered a delicious meal
but he refused to eat
it was impure, he said
it was full of dirt and filth

the host could not believe such words
such an utterance
that went against all the religious purities
the meal was prepared

with all the ceremonial precautions
 all the taboos of caste and class
 Bābā declared it impure
 it was prepared by an impure person
 by a corrupt master
 who was engaged in evil deeds
 who looted the poor
 who suppressed the others
 material gains were his only concerns

the purity of the meal
 does not lie in the ceremonial purities
 purity is honesty
 purity is devotion
 purity is love and care of the others
 purity is the purity of the mind
 of the soul
 where inner harmony and love
 are in tune with each other
 where hatred, cruelty, corruption
 are exiled to the other world
 the world of the evil doers !

in one of the encounters
 the Bābā was asked
 how does one reach the Almighty ?
 how does one acquire salvation ?
 some practice extreme austerities
 others indulge in every crass
 some smear their bodies with ashes
 others lie on sharp nails

some stay in water for days
 others never bathe
 some wear heavy clothes in summer
 others stay naked even in winter
 some have their heads shaven
 others wear their hair long
 some never leave their abode
 others never stay home
 some eat certain foods to propitiate their gods
 others avoid the forbidden flesh and fruits
 some don't eat cows
 others don't eat pigs
 some eat what is grown above the ground
 others eat only what grows underground
 some eat only on certain days
 others pretend not to eat at all
 even the days and nights
 are divided into holy and unholy
 there are auspicious hours
 and there are dark days
 the heads of humanity seem to be spinning
 in this absolute confusion

what is the right path ?
 O Bābā, the divine Master !

there is no right or wrong path
 all paths lead to the Lord
 austerities of the body lead nowhere
 love, service, serenity
 bring harmony and union

cleanse yourself of all envy
of all greed and pride
listen to the inner music
have faith in His bounty
only He who has created this universe
can differentiate and discern
the false from the true
the right from the wrong
in His will is every path !

normally we follow, O Mardānā
our customs and conventions
traditions and orders
they are the repository
of centuries of experience and wisdom
of sages, of elders

but they are not rigid
they are not sacred
this universe is not stationary
since millions of years
millions of stars and planets
earths and heavens
have been in movement
there is continuity
but there is also change
our cultures and concepts
must also follow
this law of evolution
the youth must pay respect to the elders
the elders must pay attention
to the ambitions of the youth

when the priests, the qazis, the jathedars
lay down strict rules
of hearths and homes
of diets and dresses
when they insist
on specific ideologies
on specific discourses of religions and rituals
it does not work
it has never worked
differences and dissents
must be resolved
through discussions and debates
through love and affection
through respect for the other

the transcendental truth
if there is one
is the truth of hearts and harmony
of tolerance and temperance
of equality and fraternity !

there are too many questions
there are too many confusions
my dear Mardānā
the world is rife with divisions and dissents
the jihāds and the crusades
are the order of the day
spreading hatred and enmity
the rulers have no regard for their subjects
the subjects have no faith in their masters

it is Kaliyug
the Dark Age of ignorance and superstition
where men are suppressed
where women are ill treated
where children are bewildered
who know not what to do
what to follow

o dear friend
tune your melodious Rabāb
with the hymn of love and longings
with the music of service and serenity
let us proclaim the Age of Enlightenment
the age of reason and rationality
the age of friendship and brotherhood
the age of dignity and freedom
let us proclaim the mission
that I was charged with
by the Lord of the Universe
by the Creator of all humanity !

JAPUJĪ

JAPUJĪ

let us meditate on
the One
the Eternal
the True
the Creator
beyond fear or faction
beyond time or space
beyond being or becoming
perceived by the grace of the Guru

True in the beginning
True through the ages
True in the present
Nānak, True, He will ever be !

His truth is beyond all reflection
beyond all silences and abstentions
His perception is beyond all hunger and thirst
beyond all projections and pretensions

how can we arrive at His truth ?
how can this wall of ignorance be removed ?
Nānak, one must live in His will
in His nature, in His order ! (1)

in His will
are created forms
in His will
are life and grandeur
nobility and servility are due to Him
there are some who are graced
and other who suffer for ever

in His will
is every one
beyond it
there is none
Nānak, he who comprehends His will brags not ! (2)

some sing His praise for His omniscience
and some celebrate His plenitude
some sing His praise for His noble deeds
and some celebrate His wisdom and thought
some sing His praise for His dispensation and
destruction
and some celebrate His creation and consumption
some sing His praise, for He is inaccessible
and some celebrate His eternal presence
there is no limit to His manifestation
there are millions who sing
and millions who describe Him
He is the eternal benevolence
the devotees change from place to place
through the ages, He has sustained all
Nānak, all moves depend upon His will
and all life follows His wondrous disposition ! (3)

the righteous Lord
who dwells in Truth
love is His language of meditation,
His benevolence, His benediction

what can we offer in His majestic audience ?
words of love and affection
can alone adorn His omniscience
in the serenity of the dawn
are offered the hymns of devotion

His grace endows us with form
His benevolence leads to eternal salvation
Nānak, this is the righteous path of truth
and transcendence ! (4)

beyond construction or constitution
 in His will is His projection, His perception
 His devotee is bestowed with His benevolence
 Nānak, she vibrates with His music
 with His magnificence

let us sing and listen
 and tune in the melody of love
 let us shed our miseries
 and enter the house of bliss

with the grace of the Guru
 we hear music
 with the grace of the Guru
 we acquire knowledge

the Guru is all pervasive
 the Guru is Ishvar
 the Guru is Gorakh, Brahma
 the Guru is Pārvatī Māī

even if I knew
 I cannot describe
 words and thoughts
 do not coincide

the Guru has revealed the mystery of the One
 on whom depend all dispensation
 I must never forget His manifestation ! (5)

in His will are sacred baths
beyond His will are all farce
in His will is all creation
beyond His will there is no salvation

if in the will of the Guru
a Sikh wavers not
there are pearls and diamonds
in his wisdom and thought

the Guru has revealed the mystery of the One
on whom depend all dispensation
I must never forget His manifestation ! (6)

if one lives for four ages
and extends it to tenfold
if he is known in nine regions
and all follow his hold
if he has a glorious name
and is famous all over

but if he is fallen from His grace
he is no more
he is the lowest of the lowest
a beast, a bastion of all blames

Nānak, He transforms the simplest
into the most talented
and the talented reach the heights of sublimation
but there is none
who can add to His excellence, His formation ! (7)

listen in for the truth
of sidh, pīr, sur, nāth

listen in for the truth
of the earth, the bull and the sky
the regions, the spheres and the underworld
listen in to transcend Time and Death

Nānak, the listeners ever in tune with Him
listen in to eradicate all misery and sin ! (8)

listen in for the truth
of Ishvar, Brahma and Indira
listen in to transform sinners into singers

listen in to comprehend
His mysteries and manners
listen in to reach the innermost depths of knowledge

Nānak, the listeners are ever in tune with Him
listen in to eradicate all misery and sin ! (9)

listen in for truth
 temperance and knowledge
 listen in for divine reflection
 and perception
 listen in for steady concentration
 and convention

Nānak, the listeners are ever in tune with Him
 listen in to eradicate all misery and sin ! (10)

listen in for the revelation of truth
 listen in to acquire the state of
 sheikh, pīr, pātshāh

listen in to be on the righteous course
 listen in to discern His sublime discourse

Nānak, the listeners are ever in tune with Him
 listen in to eradicate all misery and sin ! (11)

believe in to be in a state of transcendence
a state beyond all pretence

no prayer, no pen, no scribe
can delineate the state of His omniscience

believe in is a state of absolute purity
only a believer can achieve that serenity ! (12)

believe in to crystallise your perception
believe in to apprehend the entire universe

believe in to surmount all illusions
believe in that Death may not demand submission

believe in is a state of absolute purity
only a believer can achieve that serenity ! (13)

believe in to lead the righteous path
believe in to step in with honour and glory

believe in to follow the straight and the narrow
believe in to discern His truth and transcendence

believe in is a state of absolute purity
only a believer can achieve that serenity ! (14)

believe in to reach the door of salvation
believe in for all preservation

believe in for the harmony of the Guru and the Sikh
Nānak, believe in to escape all dependence

believe in is a state of absolute purity
only a believer can achieve that serenity ! (15)

the listeners, the believers, the elders
 are honoured in His audience
 they are accepted and counted
 they embellish the company of the kings
 they are ever tuned to the Word of the Guru
 but their words and thoughts do not coincide
 His infinite deeds are beyond their mind

the bull of Dharma, the son of dispensation
 patiently and steadily follows the Order
 one can never estimate the weight on the bull
 there is one earth after another

there is no end to His universe
 none can support His enormous pressure

the races, the castes, the colours are infinite
 and beyond all description
 only he who attempts realises their extension

who can fathom
 His energy, His form, His compassion
 His one Word led to infinite expansion
 to the flow of endless waters

His wondrous nature is beyond all reflection
 beyond any attempt at comprehension
 what He wills is the righteous path
 He is the eternal Nirankār ! (16)

infinite are the meditations
and infinite are the devotions
infinite are the rituals
and infinite are their recitations
infinite are the yogis
and infinite are their renunciations
infinite are the devotees
and infinite are the thinkers
infinite are the seekers of truth
and infinite are the sages
infinite are the gallant warriors
and infinite are those who face danger and death
infinite meditate in silence
and infinite sit in eternal contemplation

His wondrous nature is beyond all reflection
beyond every attempt at comprehension
what He wills is the righteous path
He is the eternal Nirankār ! (17)

infinite are the fools
who live in the darkest recesses
infinite are the thieves
who loot and plunder
and infinite are those
who remain always under
infinite are the criminals
who kill and murder
infinite are the sinners
who sin and suffer
and infinite are those
who live in dirt and squalor
infinite are involved in stinking deeds
and infinite are those
who indulge in rage and rancour
thus reflects Nānak on the affairs of this world

His wondrous nature is beyond all reflection
beyond every attempt at comprehension
what He wills is the righteous path
He is the eternal Nirankār ! (18)

infinite are the names
and infinite are the places
infinite are the regions and spheres
they are all beyond the reach of the seers

with words we compose music
we sing cosmic hymns
with words we acquire knowledge
we articulate our perceptions
with words we communicate
we arrive at divine projections
with words we establish eternal unions
we present our reflections

in His Word is every creation
in His Word is every relation
all acts follow His dictate
His Word saturates every state

His wondrous nature is beyond all reflection
beyond every attempt at comprehension
what He wills is the righteous path
He is the eternal Nirankār ! (19)

hands, feet and body
drenched in dirt
are cleansed with water
and soiled clothes
are washed with soap
but only meditation cleanses the stinking sinner
sin and service leave their traces for ever
as you sow
so do you reap
Nānak, as He wills
so is there advent and end ! (20)

rituals and renunciations
charities and recitations
are only outer manifestations
but listening and believing

devotion and love
cleanse the inner self

before Thy benevolence and beatitude
I can only offer my servitude

bereft of Thy blessing
there is no devotion, no meditation

Thou art the Word
 Thou art the Utterance
 Thou art the Creation
 the universe is an expression
 of Thy beatitude and benediction

who knows the time, the hour
 the day, the week
 the season, the month
 when it all came to be

the Brahmins have not located the time in the Puranas
 the qāzīs have not mentioned the hour in the Qurā'n
 the yogis know not the day
 the week, the season, the month
 only the Creator knows the hour of His creation
 how can I discern and discourse
 divide and describe
 Nānak, each claims to be the wisest of the scribes

the Lord is great
 as He wills
 so it is done
 Nānak, he who pretends to know
 is lost in the row ! (21)

there are millions of underworlds
and no count of skies
the Vedas searched in vain
and came to the same refrain
some have counted eighteen thousand
some more
there can be no count
there can only be delusions
Nānak, He alone can discern His own dimensions !
(22)

descriptions and discourses
lead not to knowledge
rivers and streams get lost in the ocean
reflections and perceptions do not attain His
projections

a Sultān with sway over seven seas
and mountains of gold
compares not with the smallest insect
who forgets not his Lord ! (23)

there is no limit to His description, His discourse
there is no limit to His deeds, His dispensation
there is no limit to His perception, His projection
there is no limit to His reflection, His selection
there is no limit to His form
there is no beginning, no norm

many have attempted to reach His limits
they are all lost in His infinite
His form is beyond all perception
beyond all count and conception

the great Lord resides at higher planes
greater is His name
only He who rises to His level can perceive Him
He alone knows His abode
Nānak, all grace is within His mode ! (24)

His compassion is beyond all description
His generosity is beyond all prescription

many a gallant warrior is at His door
one cannot count the seekers' rows
many are stuck in their ambitious muck

there are many who find and forget
and there are fools who never regret
there are the ones whose lot is
hunger, thirst and misfortune
this too is within His will and boon

fetters and freedom are in His will
none can alter His order
he who goes beyond His will
he alone suffers His mill
He knows what is in store
others can say no more
Nānak, he is made the King of kings
who is in tune with Him and sings ! (25)

precious are the virtues
and precious is their reception
precious are the traders
and precious is their conception
precious things are received
and precious is their consumption
precious is His love
and precious is His reflection

precious is the order
and precious is the court
precious is the measure
and precious is its treasure
precious is His compassion
and precious is His grace
precious are His deeds
and precious are His dictates

it is beyond all price
it is beyond all estimation
one can only realise it in meditation

there are Vedas and Puranas
there are infinite readings and discourses
there are Brahma, Indra, Gopi and Govind
but none can reach Him

there are Ishvar and siddhas
there are many buddhas
demons and gods
noblemen and sages
all describe His images

many attempt to perceive Him
all leave in despair
one group follows another
but none is able to repair

as He wills, so it is done
Nānak, He alone knows His truth
man tries in vain
fool of fools, insane ! (26)

imagine the wondrous abode
where the protector of all resides
where the musicians sing
where the hymns vibrate
where different tunes adore His state

all sing Thy praise
the air, the water, the fire
Dharamraj in His palace
with Chitra and Gupta
the keepers of deeds and duties

there are, Ishvar, Brahma, Devi
all sing in unison
Indra on his throne
gods in His attendance
the siddhas in meditation
the sages in deep thought
the disciples, the ascetics
the seekers of truth
and the brave warriors
all are tuned to the same hymn

the Brahmins, the rishis
throughout the ages sing along
the maidens fair
and the creatures of the underworld
join the chorus

the most precious
the sixty-eight pilgrimages
the valiant soldiers
in the four corners of the universe
in all spheres and centres
sing Thy praise

they alone can sing
who follow Thy will
Thy devotees are ever in tune
there are so many others
one can count not
Nānak, they all enjoy the same boon

He is the everlasting truth
the true Lord
truth is His designation

He is
He will ever be
the Creator of the universe
as He wills
so it is done
none dare oppose Him
the King of kings
Nānak, in His will are all things ! (27)

let your earrings be of patience
your begging bowl of hard work
and your ashes of meditation

the fear of death
your rags
the purity of mind
your yogic order
and faith in Him
your staff of a pilgrim

in every class
in every creed
the victory over mind
is the victory in deed

salutations to the highest
whose form is sublime
who has no beginning, no end
who is present through the ages ! (28)

with truth and transcendence
the cosmic music vibrates in the universe

the austerities, the miracles
are all wanton waste
the naths, the siddhas
must follow His dictate
as He wills
so is union and separation
it all depends upon deeds and devotion
salutation to the Highest
whose form is sublime
who has no beginning, no end
who is present through the ages ! (29)

from one mother is born the order of the universe
with three disciples
the creator, the protector, the destroyer

as He wills
so it is realised
all follow His command
His vision surveys all
yet He is invisible
it is a strange spectacle

salutations to the Highest
whose form is sublime
who has no beginning, no end
who is present through the ages ! (30)

in every cosmos is His abode
in all spheres there is even mode

the Creator transcends His creation
Nānak, His truth saturates every action

salutations to the Highest
whose form is sublime
who has no beginning, no end
who is present through the ages ! (31)

if there are millions of tongues
vibrating His name
there will be one eternal verse
of the Lord of the universe

many a step leads to His path
but only a few reach His abode
the tales of heaven
lure many a lowly rogue
Nānak, His grace alone can lead us there
duplicities and divisions
are dissolved in His divine discourse! (32)

one cannot force
word or silence
request or receiving

one cannot force
thought or perception
system or salvation

Nānak, He alone has the will
to frame and force
as He desires
so it is ordained ! (33)

seasons, periods, nights and days
wind, water, fire and earth
form the temple of His gaze
there are all kinds of colour and life
there are infinite names

with deeds and devotion
the truth of the True prevails
and the five chosen shine

the false and the true are differentiated
Nānak, thus is His judgement enunciated ! (34)

in Dharam Khāḍ there are deeds and devotions

let us describe the Gyan Khāḍ
 where infinite are the winds, waters, fires
 and infinite are the Krishnas and Maheshas
 infinite are the Brahmins
 and infinite are the forms, colours, costumes
 infinite are the spheres of deeds
 and infinite are the words of wisdom
 infinite are the Indras, suns and moons
 and infinite are the spheres and regions
 infinite are the siddhās, buddhas, naths
 and infinite are the gods and goddesses
 infinite are the ways, words
 infinite are those who know
 and infinite are those who follow
 Nānak, there is no end to the devotees rows ! (35)

knowledge is supreme in Gyan Khāḍ
there are music, spectacles and celebrations

form reigns in Sarm Khāḍ
there are created the most beautiful curves
whose forms one can articulate not
all attempts lead to deception
there are formed
consciousness, intelligence and reflection

in this cosmic domain
the suras and the siddhas
acquire wisdom and perception ! (36)

only deeds matter in Karm Khāḍ
 where the warriors and the valiant heroes dwell
 who are swayed by His grace, by His benevolence
 where the devotees are immersed in His devotion
 whose forms are beyond any perception
 they die not, nor are they deceived
 they resonate with His grace
 in beatitude, they enjoy His sublime gaze

the formless dwells in Sach khāḍ
 radiating grace and benediction
 there are infinite regions and spheres
 they are all beyond the reach of the seers
 there is light, there is form
 as He wills, so is His norm

there is vision
 there is growth
 there is reflection
 Nānak, its articulation is beyond all perception ! (37)

discipline is the oven
and patience is the goldsmith
with the hammer of knowledge
He strikes on the plate of intelligence
with the bellows of fear
and the fire of faith
from the pot of love
flows the nectar of reflection
in the atelier of Truth
is formed the True Word

this is given to those
who are blessed
Nānak, He is ever gracious ! (38)

air is the Guru
water, the father
and, earth is our mother

in the nursing hands
of day and night
plays the whole world

He watches every good and bad deed
as we act, so do we reap

those who spend their lives
in deep thought and meditation
Nānak, they radiate with glory
and enjoy eternal salvation !

this was Japujī
meditations on God and His universe
the affairs of this and the other world
Mardānā wanted to know
if it was always so
when did this universe come to be
how all this happened ?
how things began ?
how they turned the way they are ?

the Bābā was always there
to answer his disciple's questions
to satisfy his inquisitive nature

no, he said, it was all different
long, long ago
millions of years ago
it was all dark ...

arbad narbad dhūdhūkārā
dharan na gagan nā hukam apārā
na din rañ na chand na sūraj
sun smādh lagāēdā
khāñī na bāñī pauñ na pāñī
opat khāpat na āwan jāñī
khand patāl sapat nahī sāgar
nadī na nīr wahāēdā
na tad surg macch piālā
dozak bhist nahī khai kālā
nark surg nahī jamañ marnā
na ko āē na jāēdā ...

long, long ago
 millions of years ago
 it was all dark
 all silent and sombre
 there was no earth, no sky
 only the Being of the Lord prevailed everywhere
 there was no day, no night
 no sun, no moon
 only the Almighty Lord immersed in His light
 there was no life, no language
 no regions, no air, no water
 there was neither birth nor death
 none came, none left
 there were neither planets nor underworlds
 neither rivers nor oceans nor streams of water
 there were neither hells nor heavens
 neither growth nor decay

neither rise nor fall
nor the eternal cycle of birth and death
there was neither Brahma nor Bishan nor Mahesh
there was none other than the sovereign Lord Himself
there were neither men nor women
neither castes nor creeds
neither sins nor sorrows
there were neither sanyasis nor renunciants
neither siddhas nor seers
there were neither yogis nor jangams
nor any claim to be the Nath of all of them
there was neither fasting nor penance
neither austerities nor abstentions
none to rival the eternal Lord

there were neither lovely maids nor Krishnas
neither cows nor shepherds
there was neither the magical farce
nor the futile deceptions
there were neither ceremonies nor deceiving rituals
neither illusions nor delusions

there was neither any caste nor any creed
neither any indulgence
nor the ruthless wrath of the eternal Time
there was neither praise nor jealousy
neither life nor breath
there was neither Gorakh nor Machhandar
neither endless disputes nor futile discussions
neither any camouflage nor deliberate deceptions
there were neither Brahmins nor khatris
neither gods nor temples

neither cows nor the magical rituals
neither elaborate ceremonies nor sacrifices

there were neither pilgrimages nor sacred baths
neither mullahs nor qāzīs
neither sheikhs nor hājīs

there were neither subjects nor kings
neither prides nor humiliations

there were neither infatuations nor false devotions
neither bewildered minds nor illusions
there were neither friends nor enemies
neither the blood of the mother nor the sperm of the father
there was but one sovereign Lord
who imbibed in Himself all truth and transcendence

there were neither Vedas nor Qurā'ns
neither Smritis nor Shastras
neither readers nor interpreters

there was no sun to rise, to set
the sublime Lord imbibed in Himself
all manifestation, all immanence
and when He willed
it all came to be
in all its mysteries and extensions
the universe appeared in all regions and spheres
Brahma, Bishan and Mahesh came into existence
and with them all the snares of māyā

rare were those who discerned the Word of the Lord
 who perceived the will of the Sovereign
 who reflected upon His manifestation
 in all regions, in all planets
 who meditated upon His extensions

Nānak, those who discern His truth
 who vibrate with His truth
 they are blessed by the Lord
 they live in His truth
 they find His sublime refuge !

and now my dear Mardānā
 every thing is changed
 it is Kaliyug
 the Dark Age of Hindustān
 corruption and cruelty
 are the order of the day
 charity is given
 from the looted wealth
 the gurus go to the houses of the disciples

women follow men only for their wealth
 they bother not where they go
 with whom they sleep
 the Vedas are forgotten
 only selfish motives prevail

the qāzī sits in judgement
 he rolls his sacred beads

and declares justice in favour
of the one who bribes him

the hindu has forgotten his sacred books
his courtyard is washed clean
but his heart is polluted

the yogi lives with his women
with his children running around
he has smeared his face with ashes
and his head with dust
all this for a few loaves of bread

the temples, the mosques, the guru dwārās
have become the veritable dens of corruption
the dwelling places of evil spirits
of demons, of devils...

this sacred land of rishis and bhaktas
of Qurā'ns and Puranas
of noble men and women
of the devotees of the Lord
is invaded by the foreign hoards
who should be blamed ?

the Bābā was in pain to describe this absolute cruelty
 this absolute massacre
 he asked his Master ...

*khurāsān khasmānā kiā Hindustān ḍarāeā
 āpē dos na deī kartā jam kar mughal charāeā
 ētī mār pāī kurlāne tē kī dard na āeā
 jē saktā saktē ko mārē ta man ros na hoī
 saktā sīh mārē pē waggē khāmē sā pursāī*

if a powerful warrior fights with another
 it can be understood
 it can be permitted
 but when the terrible armies crush
 the meek and the humble
 where should one go ?
 with whom one should plead ?
 it is all in His will
 where should one turn to ?...

and in utter distress
 he meditated
 where are the mansions and horses ?
 the warriors with swords and spears ?
 the luxuries of plenty and prosperity ?
 where are all the beauties and beds ?
 where are all the attendants ?

Bābā was sure
all wealth is acquired by evil deeds
death destroys all ambitions
in His will is every act
when Bābar invaded Hindustān
all prayers were lost
all ceremonies were doomed
all charms were of no avail
no invader went blind
no miracle happened
Mughals and Pathans fought pitched battles
the entire land was drenched in blood
His will prevailed
and death took its toll
the veils of many a woman were torn
and several lost their husbands
there was no let up
His Order transcended all religions and rituals...

it is the age of the dagger
of the butcher kings
religion has vanished
the dark night of falsehood
is spread all over
the moon of truth
is under the clouds of corruption...

cheating and deceiving
are the order of the day
the kings, the denizens, the world at large
are all stuck in the mire of deception

the gold, the silver, the pearls
are only illusions
so are our bodies, our clothes, our forms
men and women deceive each other
love and friendship
are replaced by fraud and insincerity...

Bābā continued to articulate
the vanity of the ignorant
the verity of the universe
of men and women
of hearts and hearths
in a long composition in Sirī Rāg
he meditated on the complexities of life
on the mysteries of the divine
on the frivolities of human nature...





























SIRĪ RĀG

SIRĪ RĀG

palaces studded with diamonds and pearls
lit with the most beautiful lamps
perfumed with the sweetest fragrance
are all illusions, all distractions
in His meditation and reflection

in separation
my heart aches
my body burns
bereft of the union with my Guru
there is no refuge, no support

the splendour of diamonds and pearls
the brightness of luxurious beds and beautiful women
lust and longings
indulgence and infatuation are all illusions
all distractions
in His meditation and reflection

endowed with all the miracles and magic
hidden in the eternal depths
these supernatural powers
are all illusions
all distractions
in His meditation and reflection

inflated in the pride of a Sultān
with armies and populace to follow
Nānak, such haughty positions
are all illusions
all distractions
in His meditation and reflection ! (1)

if I live for millions of years
 sustained by air and water
 if I hide myself in the darkest caves
 where sun and moon never appear
 I cannot attain Thee
 without Thy grace, compassion and comprehension

the true Lord transcends all forms
 His discourse is above all norms

if I torture my body with nails
 cut my limbs with sharp knives
 grind myself in burning wheels
 I cannot attain Thee
 without Thy grace, compassion and comprehension

if I fly like a bird in the vast spaces
 remain hidden from every gaze
 without eating or drinking for days
 I cannot attain Thee
 without Thy grace, compassion and comprehension

if I have thousands of reams of paper
 unlimited ink and a fluent pen
 to describe and discern my Lord
 I cannot attain Thee
 without Thy grace, compassion and comprehension !
 (2)

all steps leave their traces
 our speech, our thoughts
 our dreams, our discourses
 our behaviour, our breathing
 Bābā, all lead to the eternal illusion
 the blind do not see the truth
 they are doomed for ever
 within life and death
 time is eternal
 the mourners do not help the sinner
 only the good deeds transcend this eternity

all attempt to comprehend the incomprehensible
 His discourse is beyond all discernment
 His truth is beyond all description

only the true Lord is eternal
 the rest is all ephemeral

blessed are the poorest of the poor
 Nānak resides with them
 he lives their life
 and bothers not about others
 God's grace protects these humble creatures ! (3)

greed is the dog
deception, the scavenger
the dishonest, the corrupt
devour rotten corpses
jealousy and hatred leave bad taste
and anger burns our hearts and hearths

indulging in flattery and false glory
the divine path is obliterated

Bābā, those who meditate and reflect
are honoured in His audience
and the good deeds are rewarded

evil ferments evil
the sinner is drenched in his sins
the being is doomed in the lust
for gold and silver
for wealth and women
for horses and chariots

the discourse that leads to His perception
is the discourse reflected
falsity and deception
are doomed for ever
as He wills
so it is accepted
the rest is lost and infected
all honour, all treasure
are bestowed on those
who live in His will
in His order

Nānak, they are rich and happy
they need no worldly goods
no false baggage
they are honoured, they are respected
others are lost in the wilderness ! (4)

there are those who indulge
in all kinds of intoxicants
they lose all senses
all measures of truth
all accounts of life and death

and Nānak, there are others
who are blessed by the Lord
who deal in truth
who recognise the eternal verity
who serve the Almighty
who are honoured in His audience

the wine of truth is beyond all crass
it is transparent and transcendental
the devotee is beholden to those
who are blessed with His truth
who live in His truth

those who meditate on His Name
on His Form and Concept
they breathe fresh air
they bathe in pure waters

their life is sacred
their happiness is sublime

how can one forget that Master
on whom depend all dispensation ?
every thing else is impure, farce
in His will is every truth, every perception ! (5)

burn your desires
and comprehend and converse
to discourse on the truth of the Lord
to discern His sublimity, His serenity

Bābā, let devotion be your pen
and your heart, your scribe
to discern and delineate His universe
to present your credentials in His audience

where there is reflection
there is serenity
where the mind is steady
and the heart follows the divine rhythm

there is sublimity
there is birth
there is death
there is being
there is becoming

there are those with honoured names
and there are others
who are wretched for ever

at the end they are all one
without class or creed
without wealth or greed

my being is scared
afraid of the unknown

Nānak, the sultāns and the sardārs
all submit to the final judgement
all are subjected to the eternal ferment ! (6)

in His will are all sweets, all tastes
in His meditation are all rhythms, all hymns
in His reflection are all projections, all perceptions
every other projection is bitter, beaten
that corrupts minds
that pollutes souls

in His devotion
is every dress, every splendour
in His benediction
is every grandeur
in His blessing
is every decoration
every other dress is deception
that corrupts minds
that pollutes souls

in His path
are all horses, all chariots
all silver, all gold
all arrows, all spears
all the insignia of royalty

every other path
every other chariot
corrupts minds, pollutes souls

in His peace is every peace
in His bliss is every bliss

Nānak, the true Lord transcends all norms
every other form is illusion, depression and deception
that corrupts minds
that pollutes souls ! (7)

rituals and riches
reflections and discourses
concepts and conventions
pilgrimages and purities
depend upon His will, His order

Bābā, empty logic leads nowhere
from absurd intelligence emerges ignorance
those who command respect
with force and wealth
those who perform miracles
with austerities and abstinence
are not honoured in His audience

but those who live in His will
who meditate and reflect
who are merged in His being
in His spirit
are the beloved of the Lord
they live in His eternal order

when the body decays
when all discourses are silent
when all senses are lost
the being withers
Nānak, the world is shattered
the universe is pushed into oblivion ! (8)

the talented exercises her talent
the foolish spreads her ignorance
only truth and temperance lead to His bliss
to His benediction
there is no boat, no oars
how can I cross the river of separation
to reach my Lord, my eternal Love ?

my Lord is splendid on His throne
He is generous
His abode is beautiful
adorned with diamonds and pearls
there are infinite horizons
how can I attain their heights ?

with the benediction of the Guru
we acquire the boat, the oars
to cross the river
to reach the Lord

the Guru is the ocean of truth
the universe of peace
the world of serenity
Nānak, with the blessings of the Guru
one attains the sublime horizon ! (9)

come sisters
let us talk about our Lord
of His virtues and our ignorance
of His love and our indulgence
the whole world is led by Him
it is the mystery of His Word
the secret of the divine discourse

ask the brides
how they adored their loves ?
how they practiced patience and service ?
how they remained steady and sincere ?

the Guru's discourse helps us all
the Lord is supreme
His nature is a wonder
His creation is a miracle
His form is infinite
His abode is splendid
Nānak, merged in truth and love
the true Lord leads to the eternal truth
to the divine verity ! (10)

thank God I am saved
pride hath given way to humility
and the demons have been subdued
desires and lust have taken leave
the heavenly bliss has descended
and truth prevails every where
fear is replaced by love
and the heart follows the rhythm of the divine Word

there are so many seekers
so many destitutes
but there is one universal bounty
whose blessings bring peace
whose bliss brings serenity

this world is a dream
in a moment this spectacle is over
union and separation are in His hands, in His will
as He wishes, so it is done
it is all in His will, in His order
Nānak, the Guru bestows truth and tranquillity
with the blessing of the true Lord
there is serenity, there is sublimity ! (11)

the devotees merge in the Lord
as different elements in a pot
the burning desire of union glows for ever
their patience, their passion
attain the ultimate truth
they are blessed
their company is a bliss
their discourse leads to the true path
to the temple of absolute truth
of divine love, of spiritual union

in the discourse of the Guru
is the salvation of the disciple
in its absence are all temptations
in the discourse of the Guru
is the purity of the mind
in its absence is all dirt and defection

the Guru's discourse is sublime
it quenches all thirst
Nānak adores that Guru
whose discourse shows His omniscience
His transcendence ! (12)

the destitute is lost
her life is deserted
like a falling wall
she has no support
bereft of the discourse of the Guru
there is no solace
no respite from sufferance
bereft of His love
all décor is doomed
there is no place for falsehood
no place for deception

he is the wise farmer
who deals in truth
who plants the right seeds
who brings peace and recognition

the one who knows her Guru
knows the ultimate truth
she is blessed
she is saved

the one who is oblivious of His presence
is lost in ignorance and infatuation
she is caught in the eternal cycle
of birth and death

all the embellishment of the bride
the ornaments, the fragrance
the bright attire
are of no avail
if the Lord is indifferent
if His blessings are not bestowed
all luxuries are evil
all indulgence is fruitless

bereft of the discourse of the Guru
there is no salvation
Nānak, in the discourse of the Guru
there is love, there is sublimation ! (13)

when life slips away
the body decays
the burning light extinguishes
the smoke lingers
there is mourning
there is sadness

greed and pride engulf the being
the Lord is forgotten
the mind is led astray
there is tension, there is thirst
only the Guru can save thee
from evil deeds
when life is no more
there is no desire, no distraction
no pride, no prejudice

if the Guru is gracious
the mind is held in devotion
truth and tranquillity prevail there
cutting the cycle of birth and death
Nānak, the being is honoured in His audience ! (14)

the body burns on the funeral pyre
 the mind is haunted by the evil spirits
 bereft of devotion
 the mind is stretched in different directions

with the discourse of the Guru
 the devotee crosses the river of separation
 bereft of his discourse
 the being is caught in the eternal cycle

the mind is purified
 by the divine truth
 the body is washed
 by the divine nectar
 in His will is the eternal peace
 the eternal order

in the beginning was the truth
 it led to the flow of waters
 to the birth of life
 to the light of love
 to the rays of purity

in His will
 the being acquires the right perception
 Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
 there is meditation, there is reflection ! (15)

Nānak, with the boat of truth
and reflection on the Guru's Word
one crosses the river of life
others revolve in the eternal cycle

the foolhardy, the manmukh, is doomed
the devotee of truth, the gurmukh, swims across
bereft of the grace of the Guru
there is no crossing, no salvation

on the one side
there is destruction, there is burning
on the other
there is construction
there is growth

He is the source of life and death
He is the source of all union and separation
in every breath of the devotee
is the presence of the Creator
the devotee lives in His presence
she drinks His nectar

her pride is gone
her devotion is eternal

due to Him light spreads
and darkness recedes
the devotee is enlightened
she acquires the eternal truth
the ignorant lives in darkness
in eternal confusion and wilderness

the eternal lamp burns for ever
the divine discourse is realised
the devotee is honoured
her knowledge is sublime, her truth is supreme
Nānak, her life is steady
her path is serene ! (16)

o dear friend
 it is the time of union, of love
 as long as you are young
 there is life, there is desire
 the time spent in devotion, in reflection
 is the time of union
 of eternal bliss

the devotee is merged in devotion
 there is no place for pride and prejudice
 it is the time for listening, for meditation
 for reflection and comprehension

it is the time to eradicate all evil thoughts
 of desire and delusion
 it is the time to be with Him
 with His truth and transcendence
 it is not the time of deceit and deception
 it is the time of reunion and reception

in His company the devotee acquires His culture
 in His company the devotee attains His nature
 in His company is purity and piety
 in His company is steady serenity
 Nānak, He prevails in the three worlds
 with love and affection
 the devotee realises His omniscience
 in His union
 there is temperance, there is transcendence ! (17)

there is no fear of death
no desire to live
every beat of my heart
is in the hands of my Lord
every vibration of my soul
depends upon the rhythm of His will

o devotee
meditate and reflect on His nature
on His culture
to eradicate ignorance
to gain knowledge
of His truth
of His transcendence
the Guru dispels all doubts
all evil thoughts of life and death
of longings and lust

the rhythm of His music
vibrates in every beat of the universe
in every breath of the devotee
in the devotion of the Guru is your life well-spent

in His audience is all honour
in His audience is the union of all impulses

body and mind
spirit and soul
are united in Him
are immersed in the sublime Being

if the mind is steady
and the reflection is serene
there is peace, there is projection
there is divine perception

Nānak, there is bliss
there is the extinction of all misery and sin ! (18)

this mind is stuck in greed and lust
 the Guru's Word is forgotten
 the evil thoughts lead to the eternal cycle
 in the company of the Guru
 there is the treasure of virtues
 there is the absence of pride and prejudice
 in His will is peace and patience
 in His service is honour and respect
 day and night there is meditation
 there is reflection
 there are all the pleasures of body and soul
 there is service, there is serenity

the sinner is immersed in her sins
 she has lost all vision
 she is afflicted with all miseries
 the demon has smothered her
 the foolhardy, the manmukh, is lost
 the devotee, the gurmukh, enjoys truth and
 tranquillity

the ignorant, the manmukh, is engrossed
 in the affairs of this world
 in corrupt practices
 and evil deeds
 the devotee, the gurmukh, serves her Lord
 and enjoys the blessings of the Guru
 she forgets not her Master
 she is recognised in His audience ! (19)

a moment of separation
leads to anguish, to anxiety
bereft of His blessings
there is no peace, no serenity

the Guru's union is love
in his company is virtue
chosen are those
who live in His bliss
who live in His light
in His supreme attention
in His sublime sight

there is no place for haughty aggression
no place for doubts and depression
lust for the ephemeral, greed for the transient
lead the being astray
from the divine path, from the righteous deeds
the beloved longs for His love
the burning desire gives way
to union and celebration
there is bliss
there is happiness, there is devotion
there is love, there is affection ! (20)

in His Word is love
in His discourse is bliss
His eternal truth separates the false from the true
His presence is a treasure full of diamonds and pearls

the Guru is the purest diamond
his discourse leads to the Transcendent
to the sublime union

those who deal in truth are never forgotten
their fire is extinguished, their thirst is quenched
they are beyond the reach of the demon
they swim across the river of life
they resonate in His sublime light

those who live in truth
live in love and union
in all the riches of the world
there is no treasure
richer than the love of the Lord
purer than the union with the Master ! (21)

roaming around in different lands
the being moves from one confusion to another
the inner dirt remains dark
life is laden with sin and suffering
bereft of the discourse of the Guru
there is no reflection, no perception

the inner fire must be extinguished
with meditation and reflection
the Guru's Word discerns truth and transcendence
in His will is all serenity
in His will is peace and prosperity
in His will is all bliss, all honour

the being is dissolved
the pride melts away
those who go astray
are lost for ever
are doomed to darkness
this life is precious
this meditation is a treasure
in His union is love
in His vision is comprehension

in His order
the being swims across the river of life
she is honoured
she perceives the divine light ! (22)

those who deal in truth
retain the precious treasure
their profit stays for ever
for the Lord knows the right from the wrong
the false from the true

stay with truth my friend
it leads to eternal virtue, to eternal bliss

those who deal in deceit and deception
they are never happy
they live in eternal agitation
like a deer caught in a net
they always live in separation
in dejection, in depression

deception has no place, no caste, no creed
it is destined to face ignominy

Nānak, the discourse of the Guru
discerns the truth from falsity
in its meditation is every virtue
in its reflection is eternal serenity ! (23)

all these riches and rituals
all this wealth and youth
are ephemeral, a matter of days

there is nothing to be proud of
there is nothing that lasts for ever
it is the time for meditation and reflection
for recitation and reception

many a friend is already gone
lying buried in cemeteries

o young, beautiful girl
think of your in-laws, of your future
your Lord will love
only your virtue and your truth
spend your time in His love
in His affection
in good deeds
in His sublime reflection ! (24)

He is the jouissance
He is the indulgence
He is the body
He is the bed
He is the joy incarnate

He is the fish
He is the fisherman
He is the net
He is the bait
He is in every play
in every pearl
He is the eternal lover

He is the lake
He is the swan
He is the seeker
He is the sought ! (25)

let your body be the soil
your good deeds, the seeds
and meditation, your water
be the farmer of the Lord
and raise the crop of virtue

shed all pride and lust
your parents, your women, your children
will all be left behind
stuck in the eternal grind

weed out all your evil thoughts
live a life of steady and serene ideas
live under the shadow of the inevitable death
discern the sacred texts
to recognise the eternal Lord
for the merger of the seeker and the sought ! (26)

sow good deeds in your fields
and irrigate them with the water of truth
be a farmer with faith in Him
you need not bother about hell and heaven
about this or the other world
clever chat will lead you nowhere
wasting your youth in ambition and desire
you will lose your very being
your very attire

evil thoughts breed evil
dirt leads to more dirt
the pure lotus is not recognised
the truth of love is lost
indulging in wealth and women
there is no peace, no projection

those who live in His will
live in His truth
they find the sublime refuge

all these austerities and abstentions
all these ritual prayers and ceremonies
lead you astray

all these riches, all these pearls
are a matter of days
under the shadow of death
all wealth and hearth are washed away ! (27)

He alone is the Maula, the Master
 who is the Creator of all humanity
 all beings, animate and inanimate
 who has put together all elements
 to create new forms, new lives

o mullah, the priest
 the end awaits us all
 live in His will, in His order
 to avoid all misery and fall
 o mullah, o qāzī
 you deserve to be a priest
 if you live in His knowledge, in His discourse
 all your learning, all your rituals
 will lead to depression, dejection and remorse

a qāzī is he who lives in His meditation, in His
 reflection
 meditate on the truth of the true Lord
 your five prayers
 and your learned discourses
 are of no avail
 when the last hour strikes
 when the end is announced ! (28)

the greedy dog has taken over
led by the bitches of depression
they bark day and night
there is a dagger to kill and rotten corpses to eat

bereft of His will and bliss
the being has taken awful form
only His blessing can save the humanity
this is the only support, only hope

burnt in hatred and jealousy
passion and anger, loot and plunder
the being leads the life of a scavenger
in the garb of a faqir
there are deceits and evil deeds
the being has become a thief, a thug
the more he hankers after
the more he is drenched in dirt

the ungrateful being is tortured
he dare not appear in His audience
bereft of all support and bliss
the scavenger is lost for ever ! (29)

all knowledge is due to Him
all discernment is due to His will
as He knows, so He acts
there is but one measure for all deeds
there is no place for clever chat

all dispensation is due to His blessing
due to His compassion
it is all His creation
His conception
His convention

His benevolence is transparent
His kindness knows no limit
acts and intentions go together
without good deeds there is no salvation

he has the knowledge
who knows his Master
his acts are supreme
his words are serene ! (30)

Thou art the ocean of knowledge
I am but a small fish
how can I apprehend
Thy vast dimensions
Thy innumerable conceptions

I know not the fisherman
I know not the boat
Thou art my only refuge
my only support
I cannot fathom the depths of Thy benevolence
the heights of Thy transcendence

Thou art omniscient
Thou art gracious
I am ignorant, I am indulgent
Nānak, I pray, I beseech
I lay myself at Thy feet

I reflect, I meditate
I yearn for Thy love
Nānak, to see, to perceive, to comprehend
all depends upon Thy will
upon Thy benevolence, upon Thy benediction ! (31)

in His will is all bounty
in His will is all charity

if He wills, there is construction
if He wills, there is destruction
He is the Truth, the Verity
the being is lost in ignominy

he who sows knows his plants
their nature, their culture
their flowers, their seeds
as you sow
so do you reap

the false wall is constructed in ignorance
the fool's acts follow no course
Nānak, in His will is all truth
all wisdom, all discourse ! (32)

what has to happen
will happen
His will cannot be altered
His order cannot be changed

there is no light without oil
one must discern and describe
the wisdom of the sacred texts
one must realise the eternal truth

this is the oil that makes the lamp burn
it gives light and comprehension
it leads to the righteous path
to the truth of the Lord

Nānak, this world is ephemeral
this life is short
in His grace
is all humility
all service
all serenity ! (33)

and thus the Bābā continued
to discern and describe
the vicissitudes of life
the complexities of human thoughts and deeds
Truth and Love were always the two eternal themes
of his divine discourse
he was critical of all rituals
of all ceremonies
of all that was based on falsity and corruption
he went to see all the sadhus and the faqirs
the yogis and the siddhas
he was always engaged in dialectical discussions
he was ruthless in his opinions
in his sarcasm
in his critique
he spared none
the highest, the richest
the mighty, the princes

he was sad
that this wonderful world
this sacred creation of the Lord of the universe
was so polluted, so corrupt
in the name of religion
the humble people were looted
the meek had no place in this world of the powerful
he lamented the darkness of the mind
the ignorance of the spirit
the stronger suppressed the weak
the powerful crushed the poor

he often wondered
why the Lord Almighty let this happen
why so much sufferance was the lot of his countrymen
why the women were considered evil
who gave birth to pīrs and princes
who gave birth to sadhus and scholars
on whom depended all creation
all birth, all begetting
all friendships, all families ...

the places of worship, the houses of God
had become the dens of corruption
the sacred courtyards
had become the dwellings of the demons
he encouraged the farmer
to sow the seeds of good deeds
to plough the fields of truth and love
he asked the Hindus
to wear the sacred thread of humility and honesty
he asked the Muslims to substitute their five prayers

with truth, justice, charity, love and devotion
 he told the merchants to deal in the business of truth
 to meditate on the nature of honesty and generosity
 he told men to be righteous and courageous
 he told women to be true to their love and longings...

Mardānā and his Guru, the venerable Bābā
 went around the world to witness
 what was going on in their beloved country
 in the sacred land of the great rishīs, of sublime saints
 who once excelled in spiritual life
 in serene and superb living
 in perfect co-ordination of thoughts and deeds
 in humility and charity
 in love and devotion

and he told his dear friend, Mardānā
 not to despair
 the Lord is great
 great is His universe
 and even greater is His will and order

there is always hope in His devotion
 in the humble attitude of love and affection
 in meditation and reflection ...

maybe the things will change
 as He wills, so it is done
 in Him there is hope, there is happiness

there is music, there is rhythm
His nature is wonderful
there is no limit to His manifestation
His sublime presence ...

and in this vein he composed his Bārah Māhā
on the vicissitudes of nature in the twelve months
in the twelve moods of his wonderful Punjab
the sacred land of the five rivers...

BĀRĀH MĀHĀ

BĀRAH MĀHĀ

in Chēt (March) there is spring
 the butterflies spread their wings on the flowers
 the nature is in full bloom
 the beloved longs for her Love
 in separation, in anguish
 she spends her time in sorrow, in sufferance
 the cuckoo sings the melodies of love on the
 mango tree
 the butterflies sing and dance on the flowers
 Nānak, in this auspicious month of Chēt
 the beloved resonates with His love, with His devotion
 she vibrates with the pangs of separation !

in Waisākh (April) the branches are adorned
with fresh green leaves

the beloved awaits for His love
for His benevolence
to cross the river of sorrow and sufferance
bereft of His grace
she is restless, she is tormented in anguish

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
she discerns His truth, His transcendence
she perceives her Love in meditation
in reflection !

in Jēṭh (May) the being cannot forget her Lord
it is hot, it is burning

she is restless
she prays, she yearns to meet her Love
to be with Him in His sublime presence

Nānak, she meditates, she reflects
to discern His truth, His transcendence

to be blessed by His benediction
by His benevolence !

in Asār (June) the sun burns in the sky
the earth is scorched
engulfed by the overwhelming fires
all water evaporates

the creatures suffer in hunger and thirst
the chariot of the sun burns
all that falls in its crest

Nānak, the beloved who prays and reflects
is rid of her sins and sufferance

she vibrates for her Love
she resonates in His presence !

in Sāwan (July) it is pleasant
the clouds of hope hover over the entire universe

my Love is in far away lands
I suffer in separation, I yearn for His affection

lonely, restless, in anguish, in pain
I tremble with every movement, every strain

Nānak, blessed is the beloved
who resonates with His union
who vibrates with His communion !

Bhādō (August) has not brought peace and serenity
the devotee is stuck in divisions and duality

there are rains all over
the earth is soaked in water

the night is dark and the clouds are thundering
the cuckoo sings the hymns of the Lord
the peacocks are dancing
the lakes are full, the insects are gathering

Nānak prays for the grace of the Guru
to spare his devotee
from all sorrow and suffering !

in Asun (September) the beloved withers in anguish
bewildered, she is lost in dualities
in falsehood and pretension, there is no serenity

the heat is receding, the cold is approaching
there are fresh green branches on the trees
but there is no let-up in sorrow and sufferance

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
there is love, there is peace, there is fragrance !

in Katak (October) His will surveys the entire universe
the devotee discerns His truth, His transcendence

with the lamp of meditation and reflection
with the oil of love and the wick of affection
there is union, there is reception

those who are drenched in sin and squalor
they are doomed, they are lost in wilderness

Nānak, those who are blessed by the Lord
they are saved
they are bestowed with His benediction
with His benevolence !

in Maghar (November) there is harmony
between the body and the mind
the beloved prays to the Lord
for His love sublime

she reflects upon the ingenuity of the eternal Creator
upon His truth and transcendence
upon His benediction and benevolence
she vibrates with the hymns of devotion

Nānak, she adores the Lord
with all her love and affection !

in Pokh (December) it is biting cold
all nature is withered and dry

the devotee lingers in anguish, in separation
in anxieties, in dejection

those who resonate with His love and devotion
they are blessed by the grace of the Guru

they vibrate with His hymns, with His reflection
they perceive His light in every projection

Nānak prays to the sublime Lord
for His audience, for His omniscience
for His grace, for His presence !

in Māgh (January) the devotee bathes
in the pure waters of divine reflection

she resonates with cosmic rhythms
she vibrates with love and affection

she enjoys the holy dip
in the union of Ganga and Jamuna
in the depths of the seven seas

Nānak, the month of Māgh is sweet and serene
the devotee bathes
in the pristine waters of the divine stream !

in Phalgun (February) the weather is ecstatic
there is sublime communion
all greed and lust are gone
there is joy, there is union

in His will, in His bliss
all evil is eradicated
all actions are sublimated

there is no place for false embellishment
for superficial decoration
in love and affection
there is purity of meditation
there is sublimity of reflection

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
there is union, there is divine reception !

all seasons are pleasant
all weathers are auspicious
all periods, all moments herald the sacred times
of divine union, of sublime communion

in the presence of the Lord of all projections
all decoration, all embellishment
bring joy and bliss of the sublime union

there is love, there is affection
the devotee is surcharged with divine perception

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
there is meditation, there is reflection
there is love, there is affection !

it was Bārah Māhā
 meditations and reflections
 on the nature and the vicissitudes of the seasons
 in the Punjab
 the sacred land of five rivers

in his Udāsīs, the travels to the different
 far away lands of Hindustān and beyond
 the Bābā often met the religious mendicants
 of different sects
 siddhas and yogis
 who practiced austerities
 to achieve supernatural powers
 to be able to perform miracles
 to impress the simple people
 to involve the innocent populace
 in all kinds of rituals and rites
 which led nowhere
 which only created more problems for the ignorant
 the divine purpose was often forgotten
 the appearances took over the transcendence
 these siddhās and yogis lived in a different world

in āshrams and ḍerās
away from the common people
they gave the impression of simplicity
divinity and sublimity

in practice, there were deluded
in their own net
in their own illusions
they stayed away
from the real problems of the people
their miseries, their measures
the metaphysical snares
replaced the Truth of the True Lord ...

in one of the compositions, the Sidh Gost
the dialogue with the siddhas
he described and discerned
the complexities and absurdities
of religious life based on false metaphysics
where the truth and love of the Lord of the universe
were forgotten
were reduced to mere ceremonies
mere disputes over frivolous issues
mere discussions in the void
mere intellectual gymnastics
to mislead the innocent
to misappropriate the spiritual and the divine

in Āsā dī օVār the Bābā described
this terrible state of affairs...

the disciples gather, the gurus dance
the feet stamp, the heads in trance
there is dust all over the hair
people laugh and return home
all this jugglery for a few loaves of bread
this indignity, this stampede on earth ...

all austerities are hollow
all miracles are illusions
the only miracle
is the miracle of His Creation
of His Truth
of His Love...

SIDH GOŞT

SIDH GOṢṬ

hail the assembly of the siddhas
hail the assembly of the sages

I bow before my Lord
who imbibes in Himself all truth and transcendence
I offer my head, my heart to the Almighty Lord

Nānak, in the company of the sages
there is truth, there is tranquillity
there is honour, there is serenity

in wilderness, in wandering
there is no truth, no reflection
bereft of the true Word
there is no perception, no salvation ! (1)

where do you come from ?
 who are you ?
 what path you follow ?
 what indeed is your goal ?

in search of the divine truth
 I live in His will
 I hail the assembly of the sages

O Bairagi, please tell us
 where do you stay ?
 where do you subsist ?
 where do you come from ?
 where do you go ?
 Nānak, what indeed is your path ? (2)

my heart vibrates with His eternal presence
 my mind follows the path of righteousness

in His will is steady serenity
 Nānak, in His will is divine sublimity

with the Word of the Guru
 there is perception of His omniscience
 there is reflection of His truth and transcendence ! (3)

Charpat asks Nānak
how can we cross the river of sorrow and sufferance ?
how can we arrive at its perception ?

one who asks this question knows the answer
you are the yogi, the sage
you should know better ! (4)

as the lotus remains pure in water
as the duck glides along
so with the Word of the Guru
with meditation and reflection
one crosses this river of sorrow and sufferance

those who live in steady serenity
who surmount all anguish and anxiety
Nānak hails those sages
who perceive and teach His truth
who live in His refuge ! (5)

o wise and noble sage
do not be angry
please answer us gently
how does one find
such a Guru sublime ?

o yogi, this restless mind finds its steady serenity
with meditation and reflection
with love and affection
with truth and transcendence ! (6)

remain away from all hustle and bustle
wander in the jungles
and eat fruits and roots
to meditate and reflect upon the eternal truth

with sacred baths at holy sites
we eradicate all impurities and dirt
Loharipa, the disciple of Gorakh
explains thus the sublimity of the yogic discipline
of steady serenity and divine reflection ! (7)

one should stay steady and serene
in country and town
Nānak, bereft of His reflection
there is no perception
there is greed and lust
there is hunger and thirst

those who are blessed by the Guru
they live in His truth
they trade in His truth
Nānak, with mild sleep and little eating
they spend their lives in meditation and reflection ! (8)

to live in His omniscience, in His presence
is the true path of transcendence
all these yogic disguises and pains
serve no purpose
these are efforts in vain

Nānak, those who follow the righteous path
do not suffer anguish and pain
they enjoy the divine bliss
they stay steady and serene ! (9)

with the resonance of His Word
with the earrings of His discourse
there is no pride, no pretence
there is no passion, no anger, no offence

Nānak, in His blessing, in His benevolence
there is truth, there is transcendence
with the grace of the Guru
there is reflection, there is omniscience ! (10)

o yogi, let the control of passions be your begging bowl
and the discipline of five senses, your cap
the submission of body, your seat of meditation
and the temperance of mind, your loin cloth
let truth, patience and serenity be your disciples

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
there is meditation, there is reflection
there is divine truth, there is sublime perception ! (11)

who is hidden ?
who is saved ?
who is in tune with the eternal rhythm ?
who is born ?
whom death takes away ?
who is immersed in the three worlds ? (12)

my Lord is immanent in the whole universe
the devotees are saved
they resonate with divine hymn
they vibrate with His sublime rhythm

bereft of His grace
the being is caught in the eternal cycle

Nānak, with His benevolence
the devotees perceive His truth and transcendence !
(13)

how is the being in bondage ?
how is he stung by the serpent ?
how is he lost ?
how is he found ?
how is there light ?
how is there darkness ?
whoever perceives this truth is our Guru ! (14)

o yogi, bereft of His Word
there is bondage
there is serpent
bereft of His Word
there is sorrow
there is sufferance
with the grace of the Guru
darkness recedes and light pervades
Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
all pride and pretence fade ! (15)

the one who controls his senses
who is steady and serene
whose mind flutters not
whose body follows His discipline
he perceives His truth in His sublime cave
Nānak, in His will, in His truth
he is sound and safe ! (16)

why is this renunciation ?
why is this wandering ?
why is this guise of a sage ?
what indeed is your goal ?
how do you intend to cross
the river of sorrow and sufferance ? (17)

in search of the true devotee
is this wandering
for his love, for his presence is this disguise
I live for truth
I trade in truth
Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
one crosses the river of sorrow and sufferance ! (18)

how have you followed this grind ?
how have you controlled your mind ?

how have you transcended hope and despair ?
how have you perceived the sublime light ?

how can one cut into iron without teeth ?
Nānak, how can one arrive at His truth ? (19)

with the grace of the Guru
this mind is steady and serene
with the Word of the Guru
it vibrates with divine hymns
with the Word of the Guru

there is no hope, no despair
the devotee perceives His light in every sphere

with discipline and temperance
the iron of evil is cut with His omniscience

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
there is discerning
there is the crossing of the river of sufferance

there is benediction
there is benevolence ! (20)

what was there at the beginning of Time ?
where was the Creator ?

how does one perceive this sublime truth ?
how does one stay steady and escape the final grind ?

with the Word of the Guru
there is no fear, no ferment
no pride, no pretence

Nānak is beholden to those
who perceive His truth
who live in His benediction
in His divine refuge ! (21)

where does one come from ?
where does one go ?
where does one stay steady and serene ?

with the grace of the Guru
the devotee sheds greed and lust
with the grace of the Guru
he gains His trust

how does one arrive at His perception ?
how does one follow His projection ?
Nānak, please enlighten us with this sublime reflection

in His will is birth
in His will is death
in His will is every breath

with the Word of the Guru
the devotee perceives His truth
with the Word of the Guru
he stays in His divine refuge ! (22)

in the beginning of the beginning
 at the beginning of Time
 there was none but the Lord sublime

with the Word of the Guru
 the devotee discerns the discourse of His
 manifestation
 the discourse of His immanence

with the Word of the Guru
 with meditation and reflection
 the devotee is rid of all dualities and divisions
 of all conflicts and confusions

Nānak, with the Word of the Guru
 the devotee reflects and perceives His truth

with the Word of the Guru
 the devotee lives in His sublime refuge
 with the Word of the Guru

the yogi sheds all pride and pretence
 he enjoys His benediction and benevolence ! (23)

from the divine immanence
there was sublime manifestation
the Creator transcended His creation

with the Word of the Guru
there is truth
there is transcendence
there is reflection
there is perception

there is but one unique verity
it resonates in every breath of the devotee

with the Word of the Guru
the yogi perceives His truth
the lotus of his mind is in bloom

with the Word of the Guru
the yogi burns his dualities and desires

he discerns the mysterious universe
Nānak, the devotee realises his self in every creation
he is bestowed with His sublime reflection ! (24)

those who reflect upon His truth
they resonate with His truth
they vibrate with His truth

those who live in falsities and pretensions
their mind is restless
they are caught in the eternal cycle

with the Word of the Guru
there is no birth, no death
there is no pride, no pretence

bereft of His grace
there is anguish, there is pain
all the physical efforts are in vain
with the Word of the Guru
there is perception, there is salvation

Nānak, with the Word of the Guru
there is renunciation, there is devotion
there is reflection, there is benevolence ! (25)

the ignorant follows the wrong path
restless, bewildered, he wanders in the jungles

he is stuck with greed and lust
he is sick with hunger and thirst
he prays at the graveyards
he is lost in ceremonies and superstitions

bereft of the Word of the Guru
he is caught in dualities and divisions

Nānak, with the Word of the Guru
the devotee perceives His truth
he lives in divine refuge ! (26)

the devotee lives in the fear of the Lord
he follows His divine command
with the Word of the Guru
he controls his bewildered mind

with the grace of the Guru
the devotee vibrates with divine hymns
his heart resonates with cosmic rhythms

Nānak, with meditation and reflection
the devotee is immersed in His sublime projection !
(27)

with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee discerns the Vedas
 with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee crosses the river of life

with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee perceives the divine light
 with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee reflects upon His immanence

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee is saved
 he enjoys His benediction and benevolence ! (28)

with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee discerns and describes the eternal verity

with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee resonates with love and affection
 he spends his time in meditation and reflection

with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee attains the spiritual height
 with the grace of the Guru
 he fathoms the mystery of life

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee is rid of his desires and strife ! (29)

in His will is the wondrous creation
 in His will is construction and conception

with the grace of the Guru
 there is love, there is affection
 there is truth, there is transcendence
 there is benediction, there is benevolence

bereft of meditation and reflection
 there is no honour, no reception
 Nānak, bereft of meditation and reflection
 there is alienation, there is dejection ! (30)

with the grace of the Guru
 there is reflection, there is discerning
 there is truth, there is transcendence

with the grace of the Guru
 there are no dualities, no divisions
 there are no wanderings, no renunciations

with the grace of the Guru
 there is the crossing of the river of sufferance
 Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
 there is benediction, there is benevolence ! (31)

in His reflection
 there is divine perception
 there is no pride, no pretence
 there is truth, there is immanence
 there is temperance, there is discipline
 there is serenity, there is salvation

in His reflection
 the devotee perceives the truth of the three worlds
 Nānak, in His reflection
 there is peace, there is projection ! (32)

in His reflection
 there is dialogue and discussion
 in His reflection
 there is discipline and devotion
 there is perception and discerning

bereft of divine reflection
 it is all baseless begging

Nānak hails the devotees
 who resonate with meditation and devotion
 who follow the divine projection ! (33)

with the grace of the true Guru
 there is meditation and reflection
 there is devotion and discipline

the yogis are lost in their twelve sects
 and the sanyāsīs in their six
 those who reflect upon the Word of the Guru
 are saved, are honoured
 bereft of the Word of the Guru
 there is duality, there is division

Nānak hails those fortunate devotees
 who vibrate with His truth
 who live in His truth ! (34)

with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee receives the jewel of meditation
 with the grace of the Guru
 he reflects, he discerns
 he trades in truth
 he stays steady and serene

with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee perceives His immanence
 His manifestation
 Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee escapes all evil and deception ! (35)

with the grace of the Guru
 there are charities, there are sacred baths
 with the grace of the Guru
 there is meditation, there is steady perception
 there is honour, there is reception
 with the grace of the Guru
 there is no fear, no ferment
 no conflict, no confusion
 Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
 there is love, there is affection ! (36)

with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee discerns the Shāstras, the Vedas
 with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee comprehends the mysteries of the universe

with the grace of the Guru
 there is no enemy, no jealousy
 no duality, no division
 with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee is saturated with His meditation

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee arrives at His truth and transcendence !
 (37)

bereft of the grace of the Guru
 the being is caught in the eternal cycle
 bereft of the grace of the Guru
 there is anguish, there is pain
 bereft of the grace of the Guru
 all efforts are in vain

bereft of the grace of the Guru
 there is hunger and thirst, there is poison
 bereft of the grace of the Guru
 the being is stung by the serpent
 Nānak, bereft of the grace of the Guru
 there is fear, there is ferment ! (38)

with the grace of the Guru
 there is smooth crossing of the river of life
 there is no sin, no sufferance
 there is eternal light
 with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee discerns the Word divine

with the grace of the Guru
 there is meditation, there is reflection
 Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
 there is sublime perception ! (39)

with the grace of the Guru
 the bridge was built
 and the Lanka of passions was destroyed

with the grace of the Guru
 Babhikhan's secret was disclosed
 and Rāvan's kingdom was ruined

with the grace of the Guru
 even the stones did not drown
 with the grace of the Guru
 thirty-three million gods were safe and sound ! (40)

with the grace of the Guru
 there is no cycle of birth and death
 with the grace of the Guru
 there is honour, there is respect

with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee discerns the right from the wrong
 he follows the contours of the divine discourse

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
 there is no bondage, no hindrance
 there is truth, there is transcendence ! (41)

with the grace of the Guru
there is meditation, there is perception
with the grace of the Guru
there is no pride, no pretension

with the grace of the Guru
there is devotion
there is cosmic reflection
with the grace of the Guru
there is truth, there is transcendence
Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
there is discerning, there is benevolence ! (42)

what is the beginning ?
what is the auspicious time ?
who is your Guru ?
whose disciple you claim to be ?

what is your reflection ?
what is your perception ?
O Nānak, please tell us
what indeed is your discourse ?
how does the Word help you across ? (43)

from the beginning of the beginning
 is the grace of the Guru
 is the auspicious time
 His Word is the Guru
 that saturates our mind

Nānak, He is, He will ever be
 the Lord sublime
 with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee sheds all pride and pretence

His Word resonates in the entire universe
 the devotee vibrates with His love and benevolence !
 (44)

how can one cut into iron with the teeth of wax ?
 how can one face the onslaught of māyā ?
 how can one escape pride and prejudice ?

in which cave can we keep the house of snow
 and the coat of fire ?

what is the goal of meditation and reflection ?
 what is the source of truth and perception ? (45)

with the Word of the Guru
 the being escapes all pride and pretensions
 all dualities and divisions

beret of the Word of the Guru
 the being is lost in falsities and deceptions
 with the Word of the Guru
 there is meditation, there is reflection

Nānak, with the Word of the Guru
 the fire is extinguished
 the being is free from all false projections ! (46)

those who live in fear and ferment
 they meditate, they reflect
 they discern His Word

they vibrate with His love and affection
 their passions are sublimated
 they live in His will, in His bliss

Nānak, they are blessed
 by His benediction, by His benevolence ! (47)

how is our mind drenched in darkness ?
 how is it enlightened by the sun of divine perception ?

how can one escape the eternal cycle ?
 how can we surmount the demon of death ?
 how can we discern and perceive His truth ?
 please Nānak, discern and describe these reflections !
 (48)

with the Word of the Guru
 the mind is enlightened
 the sun of knowledge rises
 and the darkness recedes

with the support of meditation and reflection
 there is no despair, no dejection
 there is steady serenity
 there is easy crossing of the river of life

with the grace of the Guru
 there is truth, there is light

Nānak, such a devotee escapes the demon of death
 there is truth, there is trust ! (49)

in meditation, in reflection
there is perception, there is sublimation

bereft of meditation
there are sins and sufferance
in meditation, in reflection
there is peace, there is projection
there is no duality, no deception

Nānak, when the Word resonates in the universe
there is divine music, there is transcendence ! (50)

my Lord is sublime
His immanence surveys the three worlds
the devotee who perceives His transcendence
is bestowed with His benediction, with His benevolence

he discerns His mysterious universe
he attains His love, His essence
the devotee who meditates and reflects
who sheds all pride and pretence

Nānak, he is blessed with His omniscience
with His presence ! (51)

all talk about His immanence
how do we perceive His presence ?
how do we discern His omniscience ?

it all depends upon deeds and devotion
as we are born, so are our actions

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
there is no cycle of birth and death
there is meditation, there is redemption ! (52)

in meditation and reflection
the devotee transcends the physical universe

he discerns His truth and transcendence
he vibrates with cosmic hymns

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
the devotee discerns the Word of the Guru
he lives in truth
and enjoys the divine refuge ! (53)

in meditation and reflection
there is peace and projection

with the grace of the Guru
the devotee is always awakened
he sleeps no more

with the Word of the Guru
there is discerning, there is sublimation
there is easy crossing, there is salvation

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
there is presence, there is benevolence ! (54)

bereft of His grace
the being is bewildered
he discerns not the sublime truth
he is ensnared in falsity
the demon of death hovers over his destiny

bereft of the Word of the Guru
there is no honour, no respect
there is no crossing, no support

Nānak, bereft of meditation and reflection
there is no devotion, no reception ! (55)

with the Word of the Guru
there is discerning, there is perception
with the grace of the Guru
there is serenity, there is salvation

bereft of the His Word
the ignorant is lost
he faces the onslaught of sins and suffering

Nānak, in His will is all knowledge, all discerning
all benediction, all becoming ! (56)

in His truth
there is transcendence, there is treasure

the devotee crosses the river of life
and helps others along in discerning His truth and
light

Nānak, in truth and transcendence
there is meditation and reflection
there is benediction and benevolence ! (57)

what is the Word ?
whose discerning helps us cross the river of life ?
what discipline we follow ?
where is His light ?

how can we reflect upon His Word ?
how do we perceive the eternal truth ?

please Nānak, explain to us this mystery
how do we comprehend this complexity ?
with the Word of the Guru
there is no duality, no division
no conflict, no confusion

with meditation and reflection
there is projection, there is divine perception ! (58)

His Word surcharges the whole universe
it resonates in every heart
it is the source of all reflection
it is the source of divine perception

with the grace of the Guru
His Word saturates our mind
with the grace of the Guru
there is no duality, no bind

with the grace of the Guru
there is steady serenity
there is sublimity

the devotee crosses the river of life
he perceives the divine light

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
with the Word of the Guru
there is truth and transcendence
there is benediction and benevolence ! (59)

o yogi, all your breathing exercises
all your physical gymnastics
serve no purpose
they lead nowhere

with meditation and reflection
there is projection, there is divine perception

with the grace of the Guru
the devotee perceives the truth of His immanence
His sublime Word resonates in his heart
he is enlightened, he discerns His essence

with the Word of the Guru
there is communion
there is love, there is affection, there is union

Nānak, with the Word of the Guru
there are cosmic projections
the heart beats with divine perceptions ! (60)

the air is the breath of life
but where does the air come from ?
what is the source of our knowledge ?
what is the source of our perception ?

o yogi, bereft of the Word of the Guru
there is no air, no breath
there is greed and lust
there is hunger and thirst
the Word of the Guru is the source of all knowledge
of all truth

what is the eternal truth ?
what is the sublime refuge ?

Nānak, with the Word of the Guru
the devotee discerns His truth
there is steady serenity
there is sublime refuge ! (61)

when there is no meditation, no reflection
when the Word of the Guru is forgotten
when there is no discipline, no devotion
when there is no truth, no transcendence
there is no serenity, no salvation

Nānak, with meditation and reflection
there is benevolence, there is benediction ! (62)

with the grace of the Guru
there is meditation, there is reflection
there is the nectar of His truth and transcendence

with the Word of the Guru
there is discerning, there is perception
there is smooth crossing, there is sublimation
Nānak, with the Word of the Guru

the devotee discerns the sublime truth
he remains steady and serene in divine refuge ! (63)

how can this mind, this wild elephant
be disciplined ?
o renunciant, where is that sublime Word ?
that brings peace and serenity
that controls human vanity

with the grace of the Guru
the restless mind is steady and serene
the heart vibrates with divine hymns

how can one perceive this verity ?
how can one fathom the inner complexity ?
how can the warm sun of knowledge rise
in the cave of the cold moon ?

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
there is no pride, no prejudice
there is serenity, there is verity
there is patience, there is tranquillity ! (64)

with the grace of the Guru
there is knowledge
there is perception
there is steady discerning

there is no need of breathing exercises
no need of physical gymnastics

with the grace of the Guru
the heart vibrates with divine rhythms

there is eternal light
there is divine life
there is truth
there is transcendence
the whole universe resonates with His benevolence

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
the mind is steady
the heart beats with serenity, with sublimity ! (65)

when there was no mind, no body, no heart
how could there be meditation and reflection ?

when there was no form, no figure, no blood, no bones
how could there be any perception
of His truth, of His transcendence ?

Nānak, the devotee dyed in the colour of meditation
perceives His truth, His transcendence
in all conditions, in all times ! (66)

when there was no mind, no body, no bones
there was eternal silence and sublimation
when there was no breath, no lotus within
there was eternal truth and transcendence
when there was no form, no figure
there was the Word in the beginning and for ever
when there was no earth, no sky
there was the eternal light in the three worlds

Nānak, all forms, all figures were within His
immanence
He was, He is, He will ever be
the source of all life, of all light
of all creation, of all sight ! (67)

how is there creation ?
how is there destruction ?

o yogi, bereft of meditation
there is no creation, no consumption

bereft of reflection
there is pride, there is prejudice
there are sins, there is sufferance

with the grace of the Guru
the devotee perceives the divine truth
there is purity, there is presence

with the Word of the Guru
there is no pride, no pretence
there is truth, there is transcendence

Nānak, bereft of meditation and reflection
there is no discerning, no perception ! (68)

with the grace of the Guru
 the devotee discerns the divine discourse
 with the grace of the Guru
 there is truth
 there is transcendence

rare is the devotee who perceives His truth
 rare is the devotee who finds His refuge

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
 the yogi follows the divine projection
 there is steady serenity in meditation and reflection !
 (69)

bereft of the grace of the Guru
 there is no peace, no serenity
 bereft of the grace of the Guru
 there is no meditation, no sublimity

bereft of the grace of the Guru
 there is no reflection, no salvation
 bereft of the grace of the Guru
 there are sins, there is sufferance

Nānak, bereft of the grace of the Guru
 this life is drenched in falsities and deception ! (70)

with the grace of the Guru
the devotee controls his mind and pride

with the grace of the Guru
there is eternal light

with the grace of the Guru
there is no fear of the demon of death

with the grace of the Guru
there is no conflict, no strife

Nānak, with the grace of the Guru
the divine truth is in sight ! (71)

o yogi, bereft of meditation and reflection
there is no yoga, no perception

with divine reflection
there is peace, there is projection
there is truth, there is transcendence

bereft of meditation and reflection
there is duplicity, there is division
there is conflict, there is confusion

with the grace of the Guru, o yogi
there is yoga, there is perception

Nānak, bereft of meditation and reflection
there is no discerning, no salvation ! (72)

my Lord alone knows His dimensions
none else can discern His extensions

He is manifest, He is immanent
He is the sole agent of every action

many a siddhā has searched in vain
none has perceived His grain

He is, He will ever be the Sovereign of His universe
of this grand spectacle

Nānak, there is but one unique Lord
in His will is every action, every dispensation ! (73)

thus the Bābā continued his discussions, his debates
with the siddhas and sadhus of his time

there was no place in his path
for false deals and delusions
for endless disputes over austerities and renunciations
for ceremonial paraphernalia

the corrupt, the dishonest, the cruel
could not be saved
by rites and rituals
miracles and mysteries
prayers and pilgrimages

the salvation
if there was one
depended on
truth
love
purity
every thing else was illusion of the mind
delusion of the soul ...

once Mardānā and the Bābā visited
 the famous temple of Jagan Nāth
 the priests were busy in the worship of the idol
 with candles and flowers
 the Bābā asked them to shun all these rituals
 all these rites and superstitions

he asked Mardānā to tune his Rabāb
 to compose the divine worship
 to vibrate the cosmic music

the whole universe prays for the Lord, he said
 the skies serve as the vast plateau
 where the sun and the moon burn as two lamps
 and the stars twinkle in the sky
 there is the incense of the woods
 and the east and the west winds
 sweep the extensive spaces
 with the fragrance of His gardens
 what a wonderful spectacle it is

what splendid worship
 of the Lord of life and death

all souls vibrate with inner music
 there are millions of eyes
 millions of forms
 merged in one eternal Form
 there are millions of faces

millions of silhouettes
 all form a part of the same universal gaze
 there are millions of lights within
 pushing darkness into extreme recesses
 the eternal lamp
 burns for ever
 to worship the Lord of the universe
 the little bird, cuckoo, the being is thirsty
 longing to drink the nectar of the Guru
 Nānak prays for universal peace and prosperity ...

from Jagan Nāth the wanderers reached
 a deserted place on the shore of the ocean
 in the southern country
 far from all habitation
 from all nature and culture
 Mardānā was forlorn
 he was thirsty
 he could stand no more
 but there was no water in sight
 there was nothing but the vast spaces of sand

suddenly a jackal appeared on the scene
 and bowed before the Bābā
 the Guru was happy
 there was no water
 but there was the insignia of water
 of all that quenches thirst and hunger
 the travellers followed the mysterious jackal
 as they reached the other side of the desert

they saw a small lake
full of the purest water

Mardānā drank to his fill
he had never tasted such a sweet
and invigorating drink
his greed overtook him
he went to the other side of the lake
to drink more water
to quench his unending thirst
as he tasted the sparkling water
he fell down

the water was poisonous
the Bābā came to his rescue
he explained to him the secret of the divine jackal
who was sent by the Lord Himself ...
then as usual Mardānā was hungry
the Bābā told him to wait on the bank
as he takes a dip in the lake
it took him long in the depths of the mysterious lake

Mardānā was anxious
he was worried
he started crying for his Guru

after a long interval the Bābā reappeared
resplendent in heavenly robes
with the divine food in his hands
as Mardānā had his fill
he was overjoyed
he was transported to the heavenly bliss ...

the two travellers continued their pilgrimage
of the wonderful universe of the Lord
they walked for days, for months
and reached an absolute wilderness
for miles there was nothing but sand dunes
there was no vegetation, no culture
there was no life, no movement

Mardānā was frightened
in this vast land with no end in sight
he cried, O dear Bābā
where have you brought me
there is nothing to see
none to talk to
there is not even a tree, a bush
that he could embrace and cry
there is no country, no company
the Bābā counselled patience
we have travelled so far
to be one with the Master of the universe
away from all hassle
from all that disturbs your attention
your meditation
there is nothing but sand dunes to walk on
and the stars to gaze
the great canopy of the vast blue sky is above us
the air is pure
the atmosphere is beyond all worldly impurities

this is the right place for peaceful reflection
 for meditation and prayer
 for days and months we have walked
 to reach this heavenly abode of the Master
 to breathe this purest of the breezes
 to think of none but our dear Lord
 tune your Rabāb and play the divine rhythm
 the divine music
 that vibrates in this spiritual domain
 in this sphere of absolute sublimity

of Truth and Love
 of Trance and Tranquillity ...

the eternal travellers continued their journey
 from the sand dunes of the vast deserts
 they turned to the North
 to the snow clad mountains of the great Himalayas
 it took them several months
 through wilderness
 through jungles and woods
 infested with the bandits of the midlands
 the Bābā continued to preach and pray
 for their physical and spiritual health

when finally they reached the summit
 of Sumer Parbat, the snow clad golden hills
 which were famous for their diamonds
 their gold and silver
 their yogis and siddhas

they saw the yogis lying in trance
 since ages they had not moved
 the Bābā uttered the divine Shabad, the heavenly Word
 to wake the sleeping sadhus
 the yogis moved to the strange voice
 that came from the depths of nowhere
 for they had forgotten even the human voice
 for centuries they were oblivious of the affairs of the world
 they had gone into slumber
 never to wake
 never to bother about this mundane world

the Bābā reminded them of their duties
 of their Dharma
 of their mission to spread the love of the Lord
 to declare the sublime Word of the Master
 the yogis had lived in a dream world
 they had forgotten the vast suffering humanity
 it was the Age of Kaliyug
 the Bābā reminded the careless yogis
 they should not enjoy their spiritual bliss
 while the populace in the underworld

in the vast lands of Bhārat
 their sacred land
 was suffering
 caught in the most illusory snares of the world
 the Kaliyug, the Dark Ages had engulfed their countrymen
 how can they be oblivious of their lot
 of their pains and passions

they must descend to the world below
and work for their uplift
to preach Truth and Love
to spread the Word of God
of honesty and humility

the spiritual powers, the miracles
are of no use
declared the Bābā
the sadhus, the seers
the siddhas, the yogis
must not renounce this world
to remain in their ignorant bliss
it is the duty of the pure and the sublime
to help others
to alleviate suffering and pain
to share their burden
the divine beings must not be egoist
they must partake in the general penance
in the problems and prayers of the meek and the humble
of those who know not what they lack
what they suffer
the Truth and Love of the Master
is the precious gift for all

there is no high
no low
in the eyes of the Lord
there is absolute equality

the lowly must not be ignored
 they deserve the most from the divine grace
 God loves those who love the others
 the forlorn and the poor
 the needy and the wretched
 there are no chosen people
 there is absolute equality
 there is no class, no creed
 no high, no low
 all must be treated equally
 all must benefit from the grace of the Guru...

from the inaccessible mountains to the plains of Kāmrūp
 it was a long way
 but Mardānā and the Bābā were made of tough clay
 they continued to walk, to trek
 through thick and thin
 through all the hardships of the routes of the Middle Ages

the Bābā had a mission
 it had to be performed
 it had to be followed

the land of Kāmrūp was known for its beauty
 for the most fair damsels of Hindustān
 many a man had lost his heart
 in search of love and lust
 in search of false infatuation
 the most beautiful girls of Bhārat
 had ensnared many a prince
 nobody had ever resisted their charm

as Mardānā was always anxious
 always in trouble
 he left for the city of pleasure while the Bābā was asleep

when the Bābā woke up
 he realised the misadventure
 that Mardānā was about to get into
 when after a long time the disciple did not return
 the Bābā left for the net of passion and pleasure
 as he entered the House of the Queen of the fairies
 Her Majesty fell at the feet of the Bābā
 she immediately recognised the great divine Master
 and pleaded for prayer and providence

for the Bābā
 every being
 whatever her state and standing
 was the creature of his Master
 she deserved all care and credence
 all the divine gifts of truth and love
 she was duly blessed
 but was forbidden to trade in evil deeds
 in evil snares

after the boon
 the Bābā saw his disciple, Mardānā
 who had fallen to the charms of the fair maidens
 who had been transformed into a sheep
 who had been subdued and humbled
 who had surrendered all his body and soul

to the most beautiful girls he had ever seen
it was not his fault

after all he was a simple human being
what could he do before those most enchanting fairies
he was forgiven

the slave girls
the maidens of the Queen of Kāmrūp
had turned a young man into
the most humble and meek lover

the Bābā was graceful
the Queen was humble
she asked for forgiveness
and brought the innocent Mardānā to his original state

the Bābā blessed all the denizens of Kāmrūp
the House of Pleasure was transformed
into the House of God
of worship and prayers
the Queen and her girls became the young disciples
of the eternal Guru
the great Bābā
the divine Master ...

from Kām rūp the travellers
 moved to the Muslim lands
 it was a hazardous journey
 it took long, very long
 several months
 to reach
 the holiest of the holies
 the most sacred Ka'bah
 as they had been tired
 they went to sleep ...

a Mullah passed by
 and saw the Bābā with his feet towards the great Ka'bah
 he was furious
 how could a mortal, an infidel
 dare rest with his feet
 towards the holiest of the shrines
 it was the greatest sacrilege
 he moved the feet to the east
 in the opposite direction to where the Ka'bah was

the miracle of the miracles
 as the feet moved
 so did the Ka'bah
 the Mullah was astonished
 what had happened
 the House of God
 the House of Allah
 was following this infidel, this pagan ...

as the Bābā awoke
 he realised the predicament of the poor Mullah

do not worry, my dear Mullah
 nothing has happened
 the Ka'bah is where it was
 only the curtain of your ignorance has been removed
 the Ka'bah is the House of worship
 but God is everywhere, Allah is everywhere
 the greatest miracle is His omnipresence
 you want to confine the greatest of the powers

to one small place
 to one narrow quarter
 it cannot be done

Allah's presence must be felt in all corners
 in all directions
 east and west, north and south
 all directions are sacred
 they all belong to the same Almighty Lord
 rituals and superstitions are of no avail
 there are not only five prayers
 and certain periods of fasting
 one must pray all the time
 one must remember his Master at all moments
 one must fast every day
 fasting on certain days or months
 and then eating like animals on other days
 is no prayer
 is no sacred worship

Allah's Truth and Love surcharge the whole universe
 all humanity
 all classes and creeds
 all people, rich and poor
 all men, all women
 His dispensation is for all
 without any discrepancy
 without any distinction
 without any differentiation ...

and so it went on
 the Udāsīs
 the journeys of the indefatigable travellers
 they encountered sadhus and faqirs
 they discussed the affairs of this and the other world
 they dwelt deep into the mysteries of life
 of divine creation
 of spiritual flights
 of intellectual incisions ...

off and on there were miracles
 to prove a point
 to change the hardened minds of the stubborn
 to show the Truth of the True Lord
 to remove the darkness of ignorance ...

Truth and Love
 were always the ultimate refrain
 of their mission
 of their message ...

Mardānā was always curious
my dear Bābā, the Sage, the Great Master !

you have been critical
of temples, of mosques
of Hindus, of Muslims
of sadhus, of siddhas ...

are you sure
your followers will listen to what you preach
what you discern and describe ?

no, my dear Mardānā
I have no illusions
humanity is like the tail of a dog
it can never be straightened

my followers will also be caught in the snares of māyā
in the mire of classes and castes
they will fight for the gaddīs, for the ḍerās

replete with rites and rituals
their houses of worship will be
no different from the temples and the mosques
they will bother more about dress and diet
than Truth and Love
they will worship the Granth
and will never reflect on
what is written in it
they will have no time
for meditation and introspection
for honest and true deeds ...

but what can I do ?
 what can we do ?

I follow my mission
 I proclaim the Word of the Lord
 I live in His will
 in His truth and love
 in His rhythm and reason ...

what has to happen will happen
 one must follow His order
 His dictates, His dispensation ...

Mardānā continued with his doubts
 O wise and sage Bābā !
 we have travelled so many years
 east and west, north and south
 mountains and seas
 deserts and depressions
 met so many sadhus, yogis, faqirs
 learned men of all religions and sects
 when we started
 we were young and strong
 now we are old and tired
 and yet I am not sure
 I understand this life, this universe

O Bābā, please tell me
 what is a Shabad ? what is a Sikh ?

my dear Mardānā
 you always ask questions
 which do not have any answers
 any explanations ...

a Sikh is a shishya
 a disciple, a student, a seeker
 who wants to know, to comprehend
 the infinite, the incomprehensible ...

you see these trees around us
 they all have different forms
 different trunks, different branches
 different leaves, different flowers

even on one tree, all leaves, all flowers
 are different from each other
 how these forms are born, grow, blossom
 who knows ? ...
 who knows ? ...

the Lord of humanity
 has created this mysterious universe
 we have met
 so many wise men and women
 with so many concepts and ideas
 of truth and justice
 of good and evil
 of nature and culture

of body and soul
they are infinite
created by the Infinite

a Sikh is a student
who is always in search of the Truth
this infinite and incomprehensible Truth
for more he knows
more he realises
there is more to know
knowledge has no frontiers
no finite forms
no definitive answers ...

the Sikh follows his Guru's Shabad
his Guru's discourse

Shabad is the first sound
the first utterance
that created the universe
that was created with the universe
it is the discourse of the Guru
it explains and discerns
it articulates and animates
the eternal, transcendental Truth
of forms and concepts
of sublime ideas
of infinite horizons
of hearts and hearths
of men and women
of young and old
of this marvellous nature

thus O dear Mardānā
 the Shabad is both the creator and the created
 the forms created lead to new forms
 the ideas created lead to new ideas
 there is no end to this creation
 the trees, the flowers
 will continue to have ever new forms
 the ideas and concepts
 will continue to discern and discourse

a Sikh will always be a Sikh
 a student, a seeker
 the Shabad of the Guru
 will always enlighten his Sikh
 to the sublimity of life
 to the infinity of forms
 to the eternity of Truth ...

the manmukh, the fool thinks, he knows
 what is tree, what is leaf, what is flower
 what is man, what is woman
 what is life, what is death

the gurmukh, the wise man, the philosopher
 the artist, the student, the Sikh
 knows that he does not know

all his life he spends in search of the Truth
 of tree, of leaf, of flower
 of man, of woman

of life, of death
of this absolute mysterious universe

he discerns and discourses
he articulates in forms and ideas
he creates incisive texts
he continues his search
inspiring others
the following generations
to conceptualise and create
more and more incisive texts and forms
to articulate and animate
the evolutionary process
the creative process

that began with the first Shabad
the first music, the first rhythm, the first nād

the object of knowledge
is not this tree, this leaf, this flower
this man, this woman
this life, this death
it is the concept or the idea
of tree, of leaf, of flower
of man, of woman
of life, of death
that is responsible
for the infinity and continuity of each of these

we move from the concrete to the abstract
 and from the abstract to the concrete
 we reflect and meditate
 on the eternal nature, on the eternal evolution

we feel, we imagine, we analyse
 we constitute incisive discourses
 of this most mysterious universe
 of concepts and ideas
 which engender other concepts and ideas ...

the Guru's Shabad
 discerns and discourses
 the ultimate Truth and Verity
 the ultimate Mystery

when the mind is steady
 and the body is balanced
 we reflect without deception
 we meditate without distraction
 we comprehend concepts and ideas
 we understand the true nature
 without fear or faction
 without hurdles or hindrance

to grasp the knowledge of the Infinite
 one has to merge with the Infinite
 one has to meditate in absolute isolation
 away from all prejudice
 away from all consideration
 what we see is māyā, an illusion
 what we perceive is Truth, the Verity

the eternal Shabad
the eternal concept
is the cause of all creation
of all trees, of all leaves, of all flowers
of all men, of all women
of all life, of all death
all that is created
is consumed
all that is constructed
is destroyed
all that is born
dies

where they come from
where they go
nobody knows

what is
is not
what may be
may be
this whole universe
is just a dream
just a concept

just an idea
of the Lord of the Universe ...

those who meditate and reflect
to understand this concept
live in His will
in His comprehension
they acquire the ultimate Knowledge
in the domain of non-knowledge
where truth, beauty, justice
are conceptual constructs
where cultures and traditions
are in eternal flux

where images and incisions
ideas and instincts
enlighten the student, the Sikh
of ultimate Truth
of ultimate Verity

where the being realises
his Being
and the Being of the Other
of every being who is his Other
in His conceptual domain
in His universe of imagination
in His transcendental horizon
in His Union
in His Love !

most revered Bābā
 I feel enlightened
 but I am not sure
 I comprehend all the fine points
 you have enunciated
 in your most lucid discourse

in yonder days
 you composed hymns on Truth
 Truth before the beginning of the sublime Time
 Truth through the ages
 Truth, it will ever be
 you discerned
 what is this Truth, O dear Bābā
 the greatest of the sages !

my dear Mardānā
 you want to know every thing

knowledge is a dangerous pursuit
 the erudite, the philosophers
 the pundits, the logicians through the ages
 all have tried to unravel the mystery
 of the most mysterious
 the most complex paradox of cosmic Truth

all fell in the trap of pride and prejudice
 in this wild goose chase
 of knowing the unknowable
 in the fruitless efforts
 of solving the eternal riddle

the divine principle of all existence
manifest or immanent

my dear Mardānā
the divine shabad is the discourse of Truth
it is the cosmic principle
of all existence
of life, of death
of growth, of decay
of all that is
that may be

as you sow
so do you reap
says the sage

but what do you sow ?
what can you possibly sow ?
and what do you reap ?
what can you possibly reap ?

in this duality of sowing and reaping
in this paradox of action and reward
none is sure
none can foresee the inevitable
there are numerous forms
there are numerous silhouettes
numerous nuances
between the beginning and the end
in this most wonderful nature
in this most varied culture

there are parallels
there are differences
all depends upon the cosmic principle
upon the Truth of every existence
human or animal
animate or inanimate
the Truth of existence
holds the tension
the balance
the cosmic vibration
that surcharges every universe
conceptual or physical

Truth is a conceptual construct
that is envisaged
that is realised
in the domain of ideas
in the domain of images
in the domain of cosmic discourse
that is the cause
of all being
of all becoming

sages and erudite
have attempted to discern and describe
but our words and thoughts do not coincide
the Truth
the eternal principle
of all being and becoming
transcends all composition

all articulation
all knowledge
all comprehension

the sun, the moon
the stars, the planets
all the four corners of the universe
east and west
north and south
the vast spaces
lost in the cosmic infinity
defy all descriptions

the cosmic tale
has no beginning, no end
it began before the beginning of Time
it will continue beyond the infinite horizons
of every possible imagination
of every possible dream

the Infinite Creator
has created this Infinity
millions of suns and moons
millions of stars and planets
earths and heavens
men and women
nature and culture
are held together
with invisible force

there are luminous spaces
there are dark regions
bound by cosmic rays
they keep a respectable distance

since millions of years
they move in unison
but off and on
there are collisions
there are catastrophic encounters
there are attractions
there are distractions
there are relations
there are aberrations
there are marriages
there are divorces

held by the invisible gravity
and the invisible time
they follow the divine law
the cosmic discourse of Truth and Time
the unfathomable Truth
the immeasurable Time

in the universe of stars and planets
in the universe of vegetation
in the universe of animals and birds
in the universe of men and women
in different spaces
in different regions
in different lands

there are varied forms
varied sizes and colours
varied movements, pulls and pushes
varied enunciations, music and tunes
they all follow the eternal laws of nature
of eternal Truth

this most beautiful and wondrous creation
is tuned to the sublime hymn of Truth
to the eternal cycle of growth and decay
of life and death
of destruction and resurrection

the cosmic Truth
is the cosmic music
its invisible, melodious vibrations
resound in the infinite universe
of eternal and sublime creativity
that continues to constitute
the most splendid images
on the horizons of hope and despair
of incessant struggle for existence
of immeasurable note of harmony

moderation is the order of Time and Truth
those who pretend to know every thing
know nothing

whosoever tries to transcend
the ordained thresholds
the ordained horizons
falls in the trap of pride and prejudice

Rāvana was the greatest scholar
of Vedas and Puranas
his pride, his greed, his lust let him down
he left this world in ignominy
his erudition is forgotten
his futile projections
his deceptive intrigues
constitute the folklore of the day

in eating, in drinking
in every aspect of life
in knowledge, in erudition
one must be humble
one must follow the age old dictum
of moving with care and caution
with harmony and humility

the cosmic music, the cosmic truth
follows a certain concordance
a certain communion
that must never be transgressed
that must never be surcharged
with discordant notes
with doubts and disputes

all vegetation
all nature
must submit to the ravages of Time

there are flowers
that bloom only a season
and there are mountains
that subsist for millions of years

but nothing lasts for ever
even the great Himalyas
have emerged from endless waters
water is the womb of all beings, entities
animate or inanimate
it is also their grave
there is incessant movement

the typhoons, the earthquakes, the eruptions
continue to transform
earths, mountains, seas, civilisations, cultures
the citadels of this mundane world
earths and heavens
planets and stars

continue to appear and disappear
even our earth, our mother earth, will one day
complete its physical appearance

it will be inundated by the great deluge
the Parlo
as has been ordained by the old sages

O revered Bābā, I am scared
there will be no religions, no races
no sadhus, no sages
no kings, no queens
no princes, no princess
no trees, no flowers

my dear Mardānā
it is all a matter of Time
all that is born must die
all that is constructed will end up in ruins
all growth and decay
occurs in physical time

in the eternal Time
we begin from nothing
we end in nothing
this is the sublime Truth

after one civilisation
there is an other
after one religion
there is an other set of beliefs

the prophets, the avatars, the sages
follow the same sequence

all beings, all entities
are circumscribed

all must submit to the eternal verdict
only the sublime Time and Truth
are eternal and infinite
like the Infinite Creator of the universe

my dear Mardānā
one must comprehend
the vicissitudes of Time

one must bow
to the inevitable law of Nature
in all humility
one must acknowledge
the fatality, the futility
of transgressing the thresholds
of piercing through the horizons
of imagination and creativity

there must be a concordance
a correspondence
between the concrete and the abstract
between the known and the unknown
between acquisitions and propositions

the search for Truth
is a humane act
a pious, noble attitude
but it requires a certain sustenance
a certain balance of mind and intellect

the music of spheres
the rhythm that holds
the movement of the stars and the planets
allude to that cosmic harmony
that must set the pace
of all mental activity
of all conceptual creativity

before one articulates the cosmic discourse
the discourse of Truth and Time
one must perceive the sublime images and horizons
one must reflect upon
the most abstract delineations
of the divine contours
in this cosmic infinity
silence is the order of Nature
in this cosmic music
the divine harmony
defies all human rhymes and reasons
it reverberates in the sublime cosmos
it resounds in the voids of eternity ...

and thus the disciple and the Guru
continued their endless journeys
through jungles and mountains
through deserts and depressions
they discussed and discerned
the ways of the world
the ways of the sublime
of loves and longings
of unions and separations

blessed are those
who live in love
in the harmony of body and spirit
in the rhythm of their heart
in the music of their soul
to love is to give
to surrender
to be one with the other
in thought and deed
in meditation and reflection

the sublime moments of love
the rhythmic movements of the heart
the pangs of separation
the mysterious depths of the unknown
the anxieties, the hesitations
the moments of faith and fortitude
the horizons of dark clouds
of despair and depression
of the mysterious rhythms of desires
of the absolute
of the One Eternal Unity

where life and death dissolve
in the everlasting Being
where one knows not where one is
where one is ever lonely
where Time and Space
lose their identity

where one cannot differentiate
between the cosmic union
and the cosmic dissolution

life and death are inseparable
my dear Mardānā
to live is to die
to die is to live
one who carries his death on his shoulder
lives for ever
one who is afraid of death
dies every moment

where there is fear
there is death
where there is faith
there is life
love and separation
life and death
dissolve into each other

on the horizon of life is death
on the horizon of love is separation
on the horizon of anguish is bliss

in this vast universe
under the canopy of the sky and the stars
in this endless wilderness of mind and body
we reflect on the destiny of the beings
lost in the search of the self
of the unknown
of the other

of love and hate
of life and death
of rise and fall
of heart and hearth

in these moments of reflection
in these rhythms of sublime music
there is no life, no death
no love
no separation

there is eternal union
there is eternal serenity

to love is to transcend
the being and the other
to live is to be eternally engaged
in the endless struggle
of evil and good
of truth and falsity

within one's own self
within one's own dimensions
there is absolute restlessness
there are unknown dangers
there are dark depressions
there is no peace for the brave
there is no tranquillity for the lover
every moment is surcharged with anxiety
with the sword of death and destruction
with the pangs of separation

this is the lot of those
who dare
to live
to love
who reflect on the ways of the world
who meditate on the mysteries of the universe

my dear Mardānā
there is no easy path
no rituals
no prayers can help you cross this fierce ocean
you must plunge deep into these fathomless waters

you must risk all
lovers and warriors
must never look back
their journey is endless
none has ever seen the other side
there is nothing beyond the horizon
there are no thresholds to cross
no dimensions to measure

one must go on and on
one must experience the most excruciating pains of love
one must suffer the most anxious moments

in absolute anguish
in absolute agony ...

jō to prēm khēlan ka chāo
sir dhar talī galī mērī āo
it mārag per dharījē
sir dījē kāṇ na kījē

my dear Mardānā
 all this confusion
 all this discord
 is due to human nature
 man and woman
 are independent but interrelated complexities

they are created in the image of God
 and like God they are mysterious

they have bodies and souls
 the worlds within and the worlds without
 are engulfed in eternal struggle
 in eternal strife

there are desires and delusions
 there are hopes and despairs
 there are loves and longings
 there are beautiful moments
 there are periods of anguish and pain

sublimity and serenity
 are tainted by absolute cruelty and craving
 there are moments of extreme victimisation
 there are times of extreme tyranny

the devil and the deity
belong to the same being

there are complexes of absolute chastity
there are moments of horrid rapes
men and women
are destined to live this eternal curse
they are thrown in a sea of tribulations
without any horizon
without any shore

men and women
must face this terrible onslaught
of extreme emotions and extreme anxieties
peace belongs only to the dead
to the living dead
but one must live
one must fulfil God's mysterious designs
one must follow His dictates

in age after age
seers and saints
priests and prophets
have tried to solve this riddle
to simplify what is complex
to systematise what is sensuous

my dear Mardānā
it is a futile exercise
it is an attempt to dehumanise the human
to ignore the mysterious nature
of the most complex construct

human mind is an infinite ocean
with multiple currents
of unknown urges
of undiscovered emotions
men and women
must live their lives
their tribulations and temptations
their caresses and cruelties
their loves and hates
their hopes and despairs
their affections and affronts

they cannot be chained to this material world
this physical, concrete surrounding
they must continue to constitute their lives
in the domain of imagination
in the domain of conceptual constructs

their fancies and fears
go beyond the real
they live in the surreal
in the universe beyond any constraints
beyond any deliberate dictates

ideas and instincts must mingle with the unknown
with the innermost desires of the mysterious depths

my dear Mardānā
men and women are independent
but interrelated complexities
their individual universes are sacred
their existential experiences are holy

but there is also a relation
also an interaction
in the dialectics of the being and the other
there is a respectable space
but often there is also a collusion
conflict and concord are the two sides
of the same spectacle

mercies and murders are the order of the day
we go from one extreme to the other
from one temptation to another snare

but that is how it is to be
His Will must be done
none dare spoil this sport
this riddle must remain a riddle forever
this complexity cannot be simplified

one must face life
in all its intricacies
in all its ruptures
loves and longings
delusions and deceptions

must follow their course
must reach their climax ...

kām, krodh
lobh, moh, ahankār

cannot be wished away
these five basic human instincts
of passion, anger
greed, lust, pride
fight in the battlefield of life
to the annihilation of every protagonist
to the extinction of every being

it is Kaliyug
the temptress and
the goddess of fury and revenge
the tyrant and the god of destruction and devastation
are ever engaged in their nefarious designs
in this mad world

men and women
the being and the other
all have lost their balance
love has ceded to lust
affection has given way to affront
the world within
and the world without
do not find their equilibrium
they have lost their rhythm

sex, hunger and anger
rule the roost
the muse and the music of the soul
are drowned in the noise of animosities

off and on
there are moments of reflection
moments of wisdom and vision
which herald
the hope of humanity
the hope of sublimity and serenity

my dear Mardānā
Nānak lives for those moments
of peace and prosperity
of harmony and happiness
of rhythm and reason ...

*bikh bohithā lādiā diā samund manjhār
kandhī dis na āvāi na urvār na pār
vanjhī hāth na khēvtū jal sāgar asrāl
bābā jag phāthā mahā jāl*

... ..

*koi ākhē bhūtnā ko kahē betālā
koi ākhē ādmī Nānak vechārā
bheā divānā sāh kā Nānak baurānā
hau har bin avar na jānā*

... ..

the boat of life
laden with the poison of sins
is pushed into the ocean of eternity

in these vast and deep waters
there is no shore, no end across

there are no oars, no boatman
the currents are strong and frightening

Bābā, the world is stuck in the cobweb
of sins and suffering !

... ..

some call me a ghost
others consider me deranged
a simple, innocent being
yes, Nanak is mad in love
mad in devotion to his Creator
there is none but Thee, none but Thee !



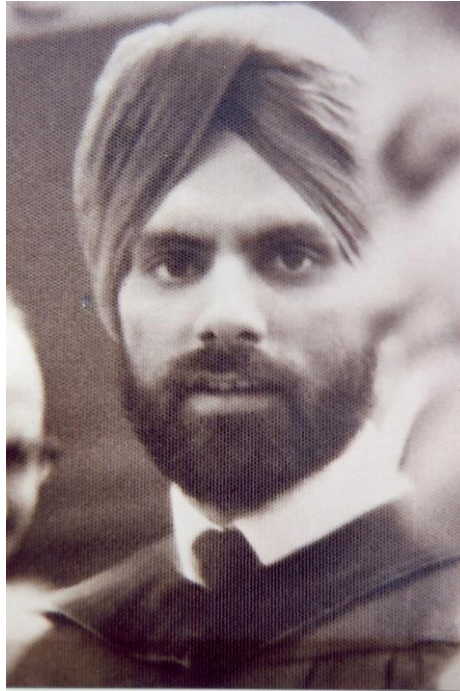




Bibi Ji
Bibi Gurcharn Kaur



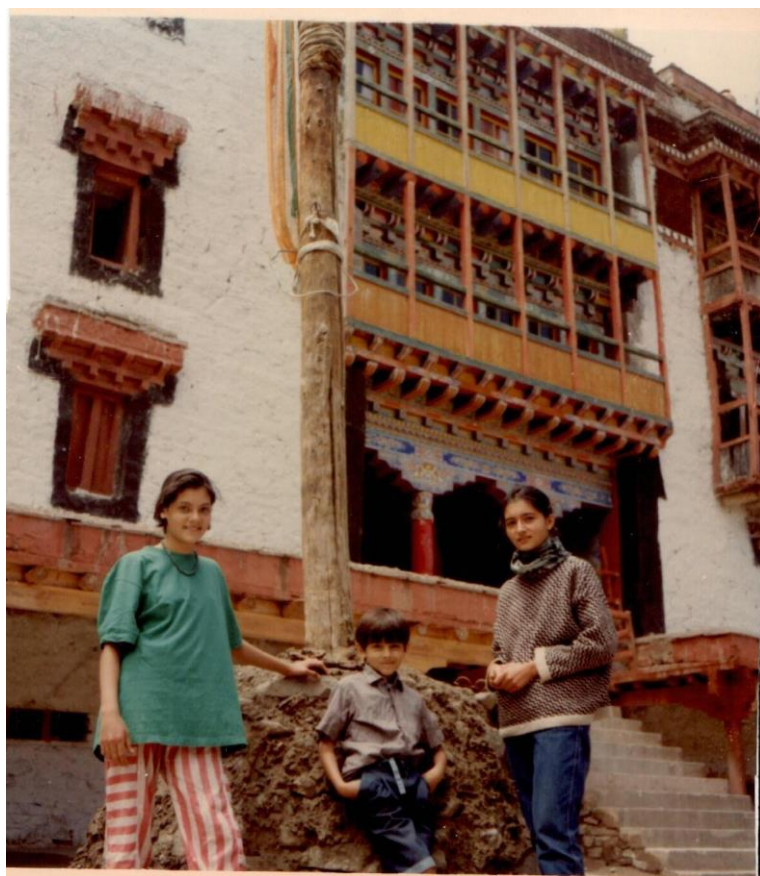
Mama Ji
Sardar Gurdip Singh Dhillon



Attaché de Recherche
Centre National de la Recherche
Scientifique, Paris, 1966.



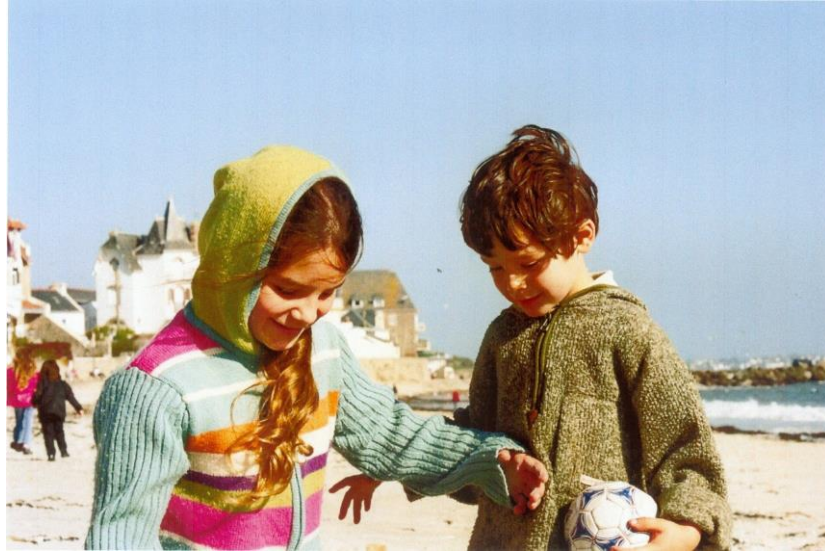
Danielle, Paris, 1966.



Anila, Eric Vikramjeet, Sandrine
Leh, 1987



with Julie and Eric at Chail



Jaspal and Nilam



Aalia and Ishaan at the Cecil, Shimla

Reviews of the first edition of Bābā Nānak, 2003.

‘Oh no!’ I thought as I opened Harjeet Singh Gill’s *Baba Nanak*. ‘Not another of these attempts to retell the story of Guru Nanak in what is meant to be English poetry.’ These, it seems, almost invariably consist of dreary prose dressed up as flowery poetry. But I was wrong. I was very wrong. *Baba Nanak*, far from being cast in the style which one normally associates with the ‘poetry’ of English translations of the *Adi Granth*, is in fact an excellent piece of work. The works that it paraphrases are some of the finest of Guru Nanak’s works, set in the context of his life story and supported by passages from the *janam-sakhis*. *Japuji* naturally appears, as do portions of *Siri Ragu*, and the whole of *Barahmaha*, and *Siddh Gost*.

The style in which the life and travels of Baba Nanak is recorded makes exceedingly pleasant reading and those who wish to have the story well told as simple but effective English poetry will find Gill’s work a delight.

W. H. McLeod

International Journal of Punjab Studies, Oxford, 2003, 10 : 1-2.

I do not know how Harjeet Singh Gill, Emeritus Professor of Semiotics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, was spurred into song when he elected to write in verse form the story of Guru Nanak, and of his divine hymns in a capsuled, simple, but effective style. Nothing, as far as I know, in Gill’s past suggested such a “return of the native” to the faith of his ancestors, for in his long academic career, he remained involved in the study of semiotics and signification under the tutelage of his French mentors and theorists of linguistics.

Whatever the reason, this volume underscores the nature of his inner transformation – from a logician and sceptic to a seeker after truth, with Baba Nanak as his light and guiding star. I could stretch the argument and see how the science of languages, which invests all human thought and its highest reaches, possibly led Gill to apply his earned insights to the Sikh scriptures...Gill’s rendering, thus, is simple, direct and nearer to fine prose. And he sustains this discourse with imagination and insight.

Darshan Singh Maini

The Tribune, October 12, 2003.

Seminar on **Signification, Conceptual Structures and Human Existence**

(In Honor of Professor Harjeet Singh Gill, Professor Emeritus, on his 80th Birthday)

Venue: Committee Room, SLL& CS, JNU
Time: 10.30 A.M onwards, 13th January 2015.

Centre for Linguistics in collaboration with Centre for English Studies, SLLCS, JNU is organizing a one-day Seminar on Signification, Conceptual Structures and Human Existence on 13th January 2015. The main speaker of the event will be Harjeet Singh Gill, Professor Emeritus at JNU since 13th January, 2000. Professor Gill who turns 80 that day, through his teaching, research and writing of academic books and papers has inspired nearly two generations of students and colleagues in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences. He opened up a new era and a new philosophical vision of studying and understanding language, literature and culture, deriving primarily from Indian social context and has been able to inspire a large number of students and researches in various parts of India, particularly Punjab and Delhi.

Professor Gill's sustained and systematic orientation in Semiotics began during his days of post-doctoral research with Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), Paris, between 1963 and 1969. He imbibed during his research, much of the intellectually stimulating perspectives on Existentialism and Structuralism that was in vogue in Paris during the 1960s. After his return to India in 1969, he put to effective practice at first in Panjabi University, Patiala, and later at J.N.U., much of the profound ideas he had learned from the great French philosophers of the day, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Louis Althusser, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. He made the study of the structures of signification in language, literature, and culture (including folk and mythic narratives) his central concerns in his teaching and research. This unique academic practice attracted towards him a large number of disciples who did doctoral research with him in the aforesaid areas. He was Professor of Linguistics and Semiotics in Centre for Linguistics and English from 1984 to 2000.

Speakers:

Saugata Bhaduri, JNU

Soumyabrata Choudhury, JNU

Ayesha Kidwai, JNU

Franson Manjali, JNU

Milind Wakankar, IIT, Delhi (expected).

Anil Bhatti, Professor Emeritus, JNU

Saitya Brata Das, JNU

Simi Malhotra, JMI

Vaishna Narang, JNU





